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L HISTORY

OF

BIRDS;

With Engravings,

ON A NEW PLAN, EXHIBITING THEIR

COMPARATIVE SIZE:

ADAPTED TO THE CAPACITIES OF YOUTH:

WITH

AUTHENTIC ANECDOTES,

ILLUSTRATING THEIR HABITS AND CHARACTERS; TOGETHER WITH

REFLECTIONS,

Moral and Religious;

DESIGNED FOR

SABBATH SCHOOL LIBRARIES, FAMILIES, AND COMMON SCHOOLS.

BY J. L. COMSTOCK, M. D.

HARTFORD:

PUBLISHED BY D. F. ROBINSON & CO.

1830.

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PROF. CHARLES A. KOFOID AND
MRS. PRUDENCE W. KOFOID

EXPLANATION OF THE FRONTISPIECE.

Upon the Surrey side of the Waterloo Bridge, London, may be daily seen a cage, about five feet square, containing the Quadrupeds and Birds which are represented in the Frontispiece. The keeper of this collection, John Austin, states that he has employed seventeen years in this business of training creatures of opposite natures to live together in content and affection. And those years have not been unprofitably employed. It is not too much to believe that many a person who has given his half-penny to look upon this shew, may have had his mind awakened to the extraordinary effects of habit and of gentle discipline, when he has thus seen the cat, the rat, the mouse, the hawk, the rabbit, the guinea-pig, the owl, the pigeon, the starling, the sparrow, the rook, and the fox, each enjoying, as far as can be enjoyed in confinement, its respective mode of life, in the company of the others —the weak without fear, and the strong without the desire to injure. It is impossible to imagine any prettier exhibition of kindness than is here shewn; the rabbit and the pigeon playfully contending for a lock of hay to make up their nests; the sparrow sometimes perched on the head of the cat, and sometimes on that of the owl; and the mice playing about with perfect indifference to the presence of the cat, hawk, or owl.—*See Library of Entertaining Knowledge.*

FRONTISPIECE.

NATURAL HISTORY

OF

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DISTRICT OF CONNECTICUT, *ss.*

L. S. BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the sixteenth day of December, in the fifty-fourth year of the Independence of the United States of America, J. L. Comstock, of the said District, hath deposited in this Office the title of a Book, the right whereof he claims as Author, in the words following, to wit: "Natural History of Birds; with Engravings, on a new plan, exhibiting their comparative size: adapted to the capacities of youth; with authentic anecdotes, illustrating their habits and characters; together with reflections, moral and religious; designed for Sabbath school libraries, families, and common schools. By J. L. Comstock, M. D." in conformity to the act of Congress of the United States, entitled, "An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned." And also to the act, entitled, "an act supplementary to an act, entitled, 'an act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned,' and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints."

CHAS. A. INGERSOLL,
Clerk of the District of Connecticut

A true copy of Record, examined and sealed by me,

CHAS. A. INGERSOLL,
Clerk of the District of Connecticut.

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PREFACE.

This is the second volume of a series of books on Natural History, undertaken by the author, with the design of introducing into Sabbath School Libraries and Families, interesting and instructive truths, instead of those fictitious stories which are now so common in the hands of children.

The rapid sale of the Volume on Quadrupeds, published a few months since, has required the author to redeem the pledge then made, to continue the series, if warranted by public approbation. That volume has not only been added to a great number of Sabbath School Libraries, but has found its way into many Common Schools; and the author is pleased to learn, since its publication, that the subject of introducing Natural History as a study into Common Schools, has attracted the attention of many intelligent persons.

He is also gratified to learn that the plan of graduating the pictures, so as to make them show the comparative dimensions of the animals, is considered by the public, as not only new, but highly useful. The same plan has, therefore, been adopted in the present volume, and great care has been taken to render the pictures accurate in this respect, and also to make them correct representations of the living birds. In doing this, considerable difficulty was experienced, for in some instances, no correct drawing of the birds could be found, and therefore the artist was under the necessity of executing original drawings from nature.

A short description of each of the Quadrupeds and Birds contained in these volumes, designed expressly for Infant schools, is immediately to be published. The pictures of the Quadrupeds have already been introduced into many Infant Schools, without this appendage; but it is thought that concise descriptions, in a separate form, would greatly assist both teachers and learners.

Hartford, Jan. 1, 1830.

BIRDS IN GENERAL.

THERE is no class of animals, a knowledge of whose habits and manners, is so much calculated to make us admire the wisdom, the goodness, and the design of the Creator, as the Birds. The forms of their bodies, and the structure of their bones, quills, and feathers, are so admirably adapted to their modes of life, and so completely answer the purposes for which they were made, that they can hardly be examined without a reference to Creative wisdom and intelligent design.

The bodies of birds are clothed with feathers, one of the lightest of all substances, and these are so arranged as to lie over each other, like the shingles of a house, so that they are a complete protection against the rain, and the cold.

That they may glide easily through the air, their heads are small, their breasts smooth and gradually swelling, their wings flat, and turned backwards, and their legs so placed, as to make little resistance.

Their bones and quills are round and hollow; their lungs are large, and in some kinds, the air passes from them into the bones of the legs, and wings; thus mak-

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With what are the bodies of birds covered?
How is this covering arranged?
What is the use of this covering?
What is said of the bones and quills of birds?

ing every part of the animal as light as possible, consistent with sufficient strength.

That the shape of each tribe or family of birds is peculiarly fitted to the modes of life which they lead, will be obvious when we become acquainted with their natural history.

Birds may be divided into two great classes, or kinds, namely, LAND BIRDS and WATER BIRDS.

LAND BIRDS.

The Land Birds may again be separated into two orders, or divisions, namely *Granivorous* Birds, and *Carnivorous* Birds. The Water Birds may also be separated into two orders, to wit, the *Waders* and the *Swimmers*.

The Granivorous Birds live on grain, seeds, and insects. Their food is taken into the stomach whole, where it is softened by warmth and moisture. It then passes to the gizzard, where it is ground to powder, and thus fitted to nourish the animal. The power of the gizzard is so great that the hardest seeds are crushed and reduced to powder by its action. To assist in the grinding, these birds swallow a few little stones, and it appears that these stones are so necessary that chickens or other birds, when confined and fed ever so well, grow poor without them. Hence those who have the care of chickens, either let them out once in

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Are the shapes of birds peculiarly fitted to their different modes of life?

Into how many great classes, or kinds, are birds divided?

How are the land birds divided?

On what do Granivorous birds live?

How do these birds grind their food?

a week or two, or feed them with gravel in their coops. Granivorous birds have short bills, which are straight, or a little hooked towards the end. They have small nails on their toes; the toes being divided to their roots, are either fitted for scratching in the dirt, or grasping the limbs of trees, or for both.

These birds are mild and gentle in their dispositions, and habits. They spend their lives in seeking their food, rearing their young, and avoiding rapacious birds and the snares of man. To this order belong the Hen, Partridge, Canary bird, Sparrow, and many others.

The Carnivorous, or rapacious birds, live on animal food, and instead of being mild and innocent in their dispositions, they are ferocious and warlike in their manners and habits. They are not formed to live on corn, and seeds, since they are without gizzards for grinding them. They have strong claws for seizing and holding their prey, and sharp, hooked bills, for tearing it in pieces. These birds live by war and plunder, and prey upon all such animals as they can master. In their manners, they are fierce and solitary, never associating together in flocks like granivorous birds. They have uncommon length, and power of wing, by which means they are able to overtake and

What kind of bills have these birds?
Are these birds mild, or ferocious?
Mention some of the birds which belong to this order.
On what do Carnivorous bids live?
Are they mild, or warlike in their habits?
How are their bills and claws formed?
Do these birds associate in flocks?

grasp other birds in the air. To this order belong the Eagles, Falcon, Vultures, and many others.

WATER BIRDS.

The Water Birds are divided, as we have already seen, into *Waders* and *Swimmers*.

The *Waders* have long legs, long necks, and some of them long bills. Most of them have their toes divided, like the Land Birds, but some of them are web-footed as far as the second joint.

These birds appear admirably fitted in their forms for the mode of life they lead. Their long legs enable them to wade about in the water in search of their food, while their long necks make it convenient for them to seize their prey while it is swimming, or to search for it at the bottom. Some of them have long blunt bills with which they probe the mud and sand, and from thence draw out their food. Others have sharp bills, with which they strike their prey as with a spear. Those which have their feet partly webbed, can swim when necessity requires, but most of this order do not venture into deep water. To this tribe belong the Cranes, Bitterns, Curlews and Snipes.

The *Swimmers*, have in general short legs, webbed

What birds belong to this order?
How are the Water Birds divided?
How are the Waders shaped?
Are they web-footed?
Where do the Waders live?
What birds belong to this order?
How do some of them obtain their food?
What birds belong to the Waders?

feet, necks of moderate length, and broad, flat bills. Most of them have their legs placed far back, by means of which they are enabled to paddle themselves thro' the water with great swiftness.

These birds are not only covered with feathers, like the rest of the race, but they have an additional covering of down next the skin, which completely protects them from the cold as well as the water.

The Swimmers live almost entirely in the water, some of them at great distances from the land, but most of them are found in bays, and about the mouths of rivers, near the shore.

Their food consists chiefly of roots, sea-grass, and small shell-fish. Many of these birds obtain their food by diving to the bottom after it, while others pick up theirs along the shores. To this order belong the Ducks, Geese, Penguins, and a great variety of others.

From the above descriptions, the young student in Natural History can readily distinguish the different classes and orders of Birds from each other.

If he is presented with a bird, without knowing whether it belongs to the land or water, he must examine the bill, neck, feet and legs. If the bill is of moderate length, the neck and legs short, and the toes divided to their roots, he may be certain that it is a Land Bird.

What kind of legs and feet have the Swimmers?
With what are they covered, besides feathers?
Where do these birds live?
How do many of them obtain their food?
What Birds belong to this Order?
What kind of bills, necks and legs have the Land Birds?

If he wishes to know whether his bird feeds on flesh or grain, this is determined by another examination. If the bill is hooked, with a sharp point, the upper mandible* curving over the lower one, and the feet are furnished with sharp claws, it is a carnivorous bird, and lives by the destruction of other animals.

If the bill is of moderate length, and nearly straight, and the feet are without sharp claws, it is a bird that feeds on grain and insects.

Again, suppose the student is presented with a bird whose legs and neck are of uncommon length, or which is web footed, he may be sure that it is a Water Bird.

If the legs and neck are very long, the bill sharp, and the toes divided, it is a Wader. But if the legs are short, the neck of moderate length, the bill flat, and blunt, and the toes are connected by a membrane, it is a Swimmer.

These general descriptions, although they will apply to the Classes and Divisions at large, do not hold true, in every individual case. Thus the Crow and the Jay, though their bills are not hooked, sometimes destroy small animals and eat their flesh; and the Darter and Rail, both swim in the water, though the first has a long neck, and long sharp bill, and the second has its toes divided to their roots.

These, and other exceptions, do not, however, af-

How can you tell whether a bird lives on grain, or flesh?
What is the difference between the Waders and the Swimmers?
Do these distinctions hold true in all cases?
What birds are mentioned as exceptions?

* The *mandibles* are the jaws of birds.

fect the great distinctions which nature has made, and on which these divisions are founded.

In nearly all cases where animals pass from one Class or kind into another, we find that it is through some individuals, which partake more or less of the nature of each Class. Thus, the division between land animals, and fish, is so indistinct, that it is difficult to say, to which kind some individuals belong.

The same observation may be made in respect to the birds. There is, for instance, no abrupt division between the Land and Water Birds, the Waders forming a kind of link by which these two kinds are connected. Among the Waders there are some which are tolerably well fitted for the land or the water, but are not perfectly well adapted for either. Such are the Flamingo, the Heron, and the Pelican.

The same gradual passage from one kind to another, is observed among the Land Birds. The Crow, the Jay, and several others, eat both seeds and flesh, thus being intermediate between the granivorous and rapacious birds.

INSTINCT OF BIRDS.

There is hardly a more striking proof of the wisdom and benevolence of the Creator, than is exhibited by that mysterious quality which is called instinct, and which is possessed in a remarkable degree by the birds.

The nests of some birds are built with such exqui-

Is the division between land and water animals very distinct?

What order of Birds are fitted in a degree both for the land and water?

What Birds eat both seeds and flesh?

What does the instinct of Birds prove?

site skill, as at once to set all the art of man at defiance, and it is still more wonderful, that every bird of the same species should build its nest in the same form, and generally of the same materials. The nests of the Robins are every where formed so exactly alike, as that no difference can be seen between them. The same remark may be made in respect to the nests of the Wren, the Quail, and indeed of most of the birds with which we are acquainted. It makes no difference if the bird has been brought from a distant country, or has never associated with any of its own kind, its nest will still be like those of its own species, almost to the laying of a straw. The situations will also be similar: thus the Robin builds on a tree, the Quail on the ground, and the Woodpecker in a hole.

The Great Author of nature has also endowed the fowls of the air with surprising sagacity in the means of escaping from each other, and from man. Were this not the case, it is probable that the weaker tribes would soon become few in number, being destroyed by the stronger.

The Hen appears to know by instinct, the enemy of her race, though far distant in the air, and will warn her chickens to escape from the Hawk, though she had never seen him before. The Canary bird, it is said, will tremble, and turn pale at the sight of a Hawk, while the sight of a Dove will not disturb her.

What is said of the form in which birds build their nests?

Do all birds of the same kind make their nests alike?

Where do Robins, Quails, and Woodpeckers build their nests?

What is said of the instinct of the Hen?

What is said of the Canary Bird?

Fear, and confidence, do not, in this case arise from experience, since the little bird, having always been confined in its cage, could have no knowledge of the ferocity of the one, nor the mildness of the other. The Quail and Partridge will pretend to be lame and wing broken, to attract attention, while their young are escaping; and the Night Hawk will seek a place on the ground, the colour of which is so near its own, as not easily to be seen.

These are a few among the instances where the God of Nature has taught the fowls of the air to shield themselves from harm, by that instinctive power, which man, with all his wisdom, can neither imitate, nor comprehend.

MIGRATION OF BIRDS.

Migration signifies the annual passage of Birds, from one country to another. It is well known, that during the winter, in this country, few birds are seen. The Swallow, the Martin, the Robin, and most other birds, leave us on the approach of cold weather, and retire to a warmer climate.

Each kind of bird has a particular time of the year, when they commence their flight, and it is astonishing with what exactness they observe this period. During the Autumn, we may one week see thousands of Swallows, or Martens in the air, and the next week not one of these birds is to be found. In the spring,

What is said of the Quail and Partridge?
What is said of the Night Hawk?
What is meant by the Migration of Birds?
What is said about the time of their migrations?

they observe the time of their coming with nearly equal exactness, and hence must leave the country where they have spent the winter at the same period every year.

Most species of birds assemble together, before they begin their flight, and seem to hold a consultation on the subject of their long journey. The Swallows, Blackbirds, Storks, Wild Geese, and many other species, perform their voyages in large flocks.

Some birds migrate only from one part of the same country to another, while others take immense journies, and fly from one continent, or quarter of the globe, to another.

The Wild goose, the Crane, and several other species, are supposed to rear their young farther to the north than any human being has yet penetrated, thus making journies twice every year of three or four thousand miles.

Nothing in Natural History is more wonderful, or more unaccountable, than the migration of birds. It is a subject on which the reasoning, and the knowledge of man is of little use. We can only say that they leave one country and fly to another, apparently either for the purpose of enjoying a warmer climate, of obtaining food, or with the intention of rearing their young. But how they should know which way to fly,—when to begin their journey,—or by what means

Do most Birds assemble in flocks, before they begin their journies?

Where is it supposed the Crane and Wild Goose rear their young?

For what purpose do Birds migrate?

By what means are they able to keep their course over oceans and continents?

they are able to keep their course over vast oceans, and continents, is entirely beyond our comprehension.

On this subject, man is obliged to own his ignorance, and in silence attribute directly to the Great Author of Nature those qualities which his reason cannot comprehend.

USEFULNESS OF BIRDS.

In addition to the pleasure we receive from seeing and hearing those birds that visit our houses and cultivated grounds, we derive a real advantage from their labours. The vast number of insects which they destroy, would often render the labours of the husbandman and gardener useless, had not a kind Providence thus prevented their increase.

These birds, says Mr. Bewick, are the industrious, regulating little messengers of Providence, without whose assistance the plough and spade would often find their labours bestowed in vain ; and weak as these instruments may appear, without their aid, instead of a land of overflowing plenty, adorned with flowers, and fruits, and trees, in rich luxuriance, we should too frequently meet with nothing but barrenness, and the silence and dreariness of a desert.

The number of insects which birds destroy is immense, and altogether beyond common belief. Mr. Bradley in his Treatise on Husbandry, and Gardening, says, that a pair of Sparrows carried to their nest

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How are birds useful to the farmer?

What number of insects is it said a pair of Sparrows destroyed in a week?

on an average, forty caterpillars every hour during the day. This would make nearly five hundred of these insects in twelve hours, and more than three thousand during a week. Ten pair would therefore destroy more than thirty thousand caterpillars per week, a number perhaps sufficient, to ruin all the expectations of an honest gardener, and reduce his family to want.

LAND BIRDS.

DOMESTIC FOWLS.

Birds belonging to this tribe, have neither hooked bills for tearing, like the eagles; nor sharp ones for striking, like the cranes; but they have short thick bills for picking up grain, which is their principal food. Some of them have strong nails for scratching in the dirt, in search of insects, worms, and gravel. They build their nests on the ground, and as the brood leave them as soon as hatched, little care is taken in constructing them. To this tribe belong the Cock and Hen, Peacock, Guinea Hen, and many others.

COCK AND HEN.

These birds are so universally known, that to describe them would be only a waste of time.

The Cock has been long a domestic bird, and it is

well known, that all animals when taken under the protection of man and made his property, undergo more or less changes, both in figure and colour.—Those animals therefore, which have been longest in captivity, have suffered the greatest changes in these respects.

Of all the feathered race, the Cock seems to have been the longest in captivity, and hence he differs most widely from birds of the same kind, which have continued in a state of nature, and enjoyed their independence.

All wild birds of the same kind, which flock together, appear alike, and are marked with the same spots, or are of the same colour. Thus one blue jay, or one robin, will give a correct idea of all the other jays, or robins, in the neighbourhood. But it is not so with the Cock and Hen. Some are red, others white, and others spotted with various colours.

These birds differ also in other respects. Some Cocks are ornamented with large and beautiful tails, while others are entirely without this ornament. The bodies of some are covered with smooth shining plumage, while others are clothed with feathers, standing in all directions, and so wide are these differences, that one kind which comes from Japan, is covered with hair instead of feathers.

Nor is this all; for there is as much difference in the size of them, as there is in their colours. One kind is nearly three feet high; and from this down to the Bantam chicken, which is little larger than a pigeon, these birds are seen of all sizes.

All these varieties of colours and sizes appear to be

owing entirely to domestication, and the difference of climate and feeding. This is known from comparing the domestic fowls, with the original stock from whence they came, which still exists in its wild state in several of the islands of the Indian Ocean, and also on the coast of Malabar, in the East Indies.

These fowls are black and yellow, the same parts on each being of the same colour. The colour of the comb is yellow instead of red, as among us. The size as well as the colour of these wild birds, is the same wherever they are found. There is one peculiarity in them, which so far as we know is unaccountable. Their bones when boiled, instead of being white, like those of our fowls, are as black as ebony.

The Cock, when attacked by one of his own kind, is one of the most courageous and unyielding of all animals ; and such is his nice sense of honour, that he often commences the attack himself, because one of his fellows happens to crow in his presence. When the battle has once begun, the pride of both parties seems to be unconquerable, and they will hold out to the last breath, and die on the spot, rather than yield the victory.

In these contests, when one becomes so exhausted that he can no longer stand, but lies bleeding on the ground, the other crows over him in token of victory and triumph, thus cruelly insulting his fallen enemy. When this is heard, the poor prostrate bird, as though he had resolved to suffer death rather than endure insult, jumps up, and if he can stand, renews the battle, and fights until his last breath.

But the Cock often conducts himself in quite a dif-

ferent manner, on other occasions ; for when he meets the hawk, an enemy of his race, and the destroyer of his brood, his pride and courage generally forsake him, and he skulks away into the first safe place, leaving his consort, the Hen, to take care of herself and her chickens in the best manner she can.

This conduct of the silly brute is imitated at the present day by some human beings who call themselves men of honour. If one of these men happen to speak a sharp word to the other, he considers it as a kind of crowing over him, and immediately offers to do battle with him, by sending him what is called a *challenge*, that is, an offer to fight him with swords, pistols, or guns, until one or the other is killed. This is called a *duel*, and sometimes when one is wounded, but not quite killed, the other will crow over him, by saying that he is a coward, unless he continues to fight as long as he can hold his sword, or pistol, in his hand, and thus he is insulted, even while his blood is running, unless he fights until he kills, or is killed himself.

At the same time, these men, who are so ready to spill their blood in defence of their honour, or in other words, who had rather die than suffer what they call an insult, are very often, both of them cowards. For let an enemy come into their country and destroy it with fire and sword, and very likely these men would be the first to skulk away into some safe place, and like the Cock, let their wives and children take care of themselves.

It is personal pride therefore, and not true courage, which makes men fight duels, and kill one another for the sake of honour. And he who does this, it is quite

plain, is as much guilty of the bloody crime of murder, as he who lies in wait and shoots another because he is angry with him.

The Cock is however generally very attentive to his females. He leads them into the fields to feed, hardly ever going out of their sight, and appearing very consequential and happy at the head of his family. If a stranger of his own kind ventures among the group on such occasions, he instantly, and without ceremony attacks him, and if possible drives the intruder off the ground. He then returns to his Hens, crows several times in token of victory, and seems to expect from them some especial notice, as a reward for his bravery.

This bird is a very early riser, generally beginning to crow at the dawn of day, soon after which he goes forth with his family in search of breakfast.

The number of eggs which some Hens will lay in a year, if well fed, and allowed the liberty of ranging in the open air, is about two hundred. If left to herself, she however seldom lays more than twenty eggs before she shews a disposition to hatch them. But if the eggs are taken away, she will continue to lay others, in the hope of increasing the number, and thus laying the foundation of a more numerous family. If she is disappointed in this, and the season for hatching has nearly expired, she will begin to sit even if she has only one or two eggs.

The nest of the Hen is constructed with very little care, because her instinct teaches her that it is useless to make a place for the comfort of her brood, since they leave the nest and run about as soon as they are hatched. She however takes care that the place where

she retires to produce her family should be covered from the rain, and as much as possible out of the way of such animals as would rob her nest.

When she begins to sit, she seems to shew by her conduct, that she is aware how important a business she has undertaken. On such occasions, nothing can exceed her perseverance and her patience. She remains on her nest whole days and nights in succession, without eating, or drinking; and when she is forced, by hunger, to leave her eggs for a few minutes, she runs to the door of her mistress, and by her clucking, makes known her wants; and having taken a few kernels of corn, hurries back to her charge. If however she gets nothing to eat, she does not loiter on this account, but goes to her nest, and if ever so hungry, takes care that her future brood does not perish by her eggs growing cold in her absence.

While sitting, she turns her eggs over, and now and then puts the outside ones into the middle, so that each may be equally warmed. And when the time comes near for the chickens to break their shells, she seems still more anxious, and often does not leave her nest a moment for several days, and as many nights.

The strongest and largest chickens burst their shells first, while the weaker ones leave theirs last, and sometimes die in attempting to escape. When all that are living have come forth, she then leads them into the open air, and begins to provide food for them in the best manner she is able. In this however she is generally assisted by her mistress, who watches the coming of the brood with interest, and the moment she finds them moving, supplies all the necessary provision.

The mother however does not stand idle and see them eat, but desirous of gaining their affection by her tender care, takes up small particles of the food, and one after the other calls them and puts it into their mouths.

At this time, affection for her young, and the pride she seems to feel as a mother, produces a remarkable change in her character. From being cowardly, and voracious, she becomes courageous, and a very small eater. She will attack any animal, whether it be dog, horse, hawk, or man, which comes too near her brood, and she will eat nothing herself which her chickens can swallow, unless there is enough for all.

When marching out to take the air, and find food for her little troop, she acts as their guide, and commander. Calls them when she finds a morsel fit for their food, and when she sees a hawk in the air, warns them of their danger by a peculiar note, on hearing which every one seeks a place of safety, and hides itself from the enemy.

At night, or in damp weather, she gathers them under her wings to keep them warm, and by a peculiar and gentle voice, seems to hush them to sleep.

It has been stated, that the Hen will lay, in the course of the year, about two hundred eggs, which is twenty times as many as she can hatch, and bring up the chickens.

Now it seems to be the nature of man, so far as lies in his power, to turn every thing to his own profit, or advantage; and if chickens could be hatched, and reared in some artificial manner, they would yield a vastly greater profit than the eggs. Hence men sought out

and invented a way of hatching chickens without Hens, and thus by an unnatural method, of producing immense broods without mothers.

The invention of hatching chickens by artificial heat, appears to have been made in Egypt, in which country it has long been practised, and is still carried on as a trade. Men who follow this business, go about seeking employment, by offering to take charge of the ovens in which chickens are hatched.

These ovens, according to Mr. Bingley, are of different sizes, but large enough to contain from forty to eighty thousand eggs each. They are of very simple construction, consisting only of low arched apartments of clay. In these apartments are two rows of shelves on which the eggs are laid, care being taken that they should not touch each other. Each egg is slightly moved, five or six times every day. During the first eight days, a considerable degree of heat is kept up, but after this time, the warmth is gradually diminished, until at the period when the eggs are about to be hatched, the fire is entirely put out, the air in that country being sufficiently warm for the comfort and health of the brood. After they are hatched, the chickens require very little care besides feeding, the heat in that country being so great, as not to make it necessary to brood, or cover them, even in the night.

The Cock never sleeps so soundly as not to be easily awakened. His great watchfulness is known by his crowing in the night, and particularly towards morning, to let us know that the day dawns, and that the sun is rising to enlighten the earth.

To the crowing of this bird towards morning our

Saviour alludes, when he exhorts his disciples to be ever watchful and ready for his coming. "Watch ye, therefore, for ye know not when the master of the house cometh; at even, or at midnight, or at the cock crowing, or in the morning." Mark, chap. 13th, v. 35.

The Cock crows regularly at about midnight, as well as in the morning, and these periods have been called the first and second cock crowing. If however reference is made to the crowing of this bird without mentioning the time, it is understood to mean the morning crowing, because this is the period when he is most commonly heard.

To these distinctions our Saviour seems to have referred, when he warned his disciple Peter, that he was about to disown, and deny his Master. "And Jesus saith unto him, verily I say unto thee, that this day, even in this night, before the cock crow *twice* thou shalt deny me thrice." Mark, chap. 14, verse 30.

By this is understood that before the next morning, or perhaps between midnight, when the Cock crows the first time, and the dawn of day, when he crows again, that Peter would deny that he knew the Saviour.

And this came to pass according to the prediction; for when this disciple saw his Master in the hands of his enemies, who were leading him away to crucify him, his fears for his own safety prevailed over his former attachment, and he cruelly and deceitfully denied that he ever knew him. "And as Peter was beneath, in the palace, there cometh one of the maids of the high priest; and when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him, and said, and thou also

wast with Jesus of Nazareth." "But he denied, saying, I know not what thou sayest. And he went out into the porch; and the Cock crew." Mark, chapter 14, verses 66—68.

After this he was again accused by this maid, and by another person, of being one of the Saviour's disciples, and at each time he declared that he did not know him. And immediately after the third denial the Cock crew the second time. So that the prediction, "Before the Cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice," was exactly fulfilled.

But as in other cases, Peter's deceitfulness and lying did not go unpunished, for his conscience accused him of his crime as soon as it was committed, for he "remembered the words of Jesus." "And he went out and wept bitterly."

The Hen, it is well known, gathers her chickens under her wings, both to protect them from danger and to keep them warm. To this trait of tenderness in her natural history, our Saviour alludes, when he addressed the Jews, and warned them of the miseries about to descend on their city as a punishment for having rejected his offers of mercy. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children, even as a Hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." Matthew, chapter 23, verse 37.

How beautifully, and how affectionately does this express the Saviour's love towards rebellious men. Even after they had rejected, and despised him, and his warnings, still he was willing to take them under

his divine protection, as a Hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and to save them from everlasting ruin.

THE PEACOCK.

There are only four species of the Peacock known. Of these, two are found in Asia, one in Africa, and one in China. The kind known and domesticated in Europe and America, came originally from Asia. They are all birds of large size and great beauty. Their food is corn, herbs and insects.

THE CRESTED PEACOCK.

[*This is our common Peacock.*]

How large a bird is the Crested Peacock?

The Crested Peacock is about five feet long, the tail being three feet and a half, and the body one foot and a half.

What is the shape of this bird?

The shape of this bird is in some respects very beautiful. The head is small, and crowned with a crest, consisting of a few straight feathers; the neck is long and small, tapering most gracefully from the breast upwards; the body is of considerable size; the wings short, and the tail very large and long.

What is the colour of the Peacock?

Its colours are very splendid, and so arranged, as to produce the most striking effect. The back and wings are of a light ash colour, mingled with black: the head, neck, and breast are greenish blue, with a gloss, which, in the sun, appears exceedingly brilliant;

the eyes are set between two stripes of white; the feathers of the tail, are a changeable mixture of green, blue, purple and gold; towards the end, each one has a dark spot, surrounded with gold and green, appearing like eyes. The whole of this train the bird can spread into the form of a half circle, when it becomes one of the most brilliant and beautiful objects imaginable.

The Peacock, though a native of Asia, was at a very early period carried to various parts of the world. In the days of Solomon, we find that these birds were imported from the east, in order to gratify the taste of that monarch for the beautiful productions of nature. Among other articles which his ships brought him, are mentioned "gold, silver, ivory, apes, and Peacocks." First of Kings, chap. 10, verse 22.

Among the Romans, in their days of luxury and extravagance, Peacocks were held in the highest estimation; and the person who first ordered them to be served up at his table, as an article of food, became so celebrated on this account, that his name is known to this day.

After their first introduction to the table, it soon became fashionable among the great men at Rome to eat Peacocks; not probably on account of their goodness, but because their expense was such as to prevent most people from offering so costly a dish; so that the man who first undertook the business of fattening them for the markets, made his fortune by the trade.

In Greece, at one period, these birds were so highly esteemed, that the price of a pair of them was more than a hundred dollars our money; and we are told,

that when Alexander the Great was in India, he was so struck with their beauty, that he laid a heavy fine and punishment on any person who should in any manner wound, or injure them.

At this time, when a pair was carried to Athens, the rich went from all parts of Greece, for no other purpose than to behold so great a curiosity; each person paying a certain sum for the sight.

In what manner the Romans cooked their Peacocks, we are not informed, but at the present day, after the highest seasoning, their flesh is still black, tough, and when compared with that of other birds, but very poor and insipid eating.

How long Peacocks were considered a delicious, as well as a costly article of diet, does not appear; but in the time of King Francis First, of France, about the beginning of the sixteenth century, these birds were still used at the entertainments of the great, though they were not eaten.

At that time, the fashion was to take off the skin, and then having prepared the flesh with spices and salt, the skin was again drawn on, so that the bird appeared in full plumage, and was in no way injured by this preparation.

Thus fitted up for service, it was kept for many years, to be set on the table in full dress, on great occasions. At weddings, and other high times, they filled the beak and throat of the bird with cotton and camphor, which was set on fire for the entertainment of the company.

For the beauty of its plumage, few of the feathered race can compare with the Peacock. But this poor

bird can boast of nothing but outside show. His voice, which is a kind of scream, is unpleasant, and even shocking to the ear ; his legs are black, and so homely, that it is said he will never look at them himself. He is a voracious eater, and devours plants, seeds, corn and insects, without distinction. In gardens, and planted fields, he is such an intolerable nuisance, that his owner is often obliged to pay money for the damage he commits.

The disgusting habits and bad conduct of this bird, therefore, make him a disagreeable companion, notwithstanding his beauty. So that those who are well acquainted with him, take little notice of his dress, his character being a matter of much more consequence to them than the fine appearance of his feathers.

Let this be a lesson to those who expect that personal beauty, and external show, rather than good qualities, will gain them permanent respect, and virtuous influence in the world. The truth is, that personal beauty, like the Peacock's plumage, after being a little while admired, if not combined with other charms, is every where soon forgotten, or despised.

Let a person be ever so gaudily dressed, and ever so handsome, if he is disgusting in his manners, and overbearing in his conduct, he will soon find himself shunned and hated by every body ; whereas a person of amiable and obliging manners, if neither handsome in person, nor dressed in fine clothes, will always be beloved, and always have influence, wherever he goes. Who would not rather possess the modest Quaker

dress of the turtle dove, with its endearing manners, than all the beauty of the Peacock, with his voracious appetite and pernicious habits.

THE GROUS.

Birds of the Grous kind have thick short bills, the upper mandible being a little longer than the lower one, and slightly bent at the end. Their toes are four in number, three forward, of which the middle one is much the longest, and one backward, which is quite short.

They fly very swiftly, but their wings are so short, that they cannot continue their flight to any great distance. They skulk in the woods, and are seen with difficulty, except when on the wing.

To this tribe belong the Grous, Partridge, and some others.

THE PINNATED GROUS.

How large is the Pinnated Grous?

The Pinnated Grous is a foot and a half long, and with the wings extended two feet and three inches wide. It has a second pair of wings on the neck.

What is the colour of this bird?

Its colour on the back, is yellowish brown, spotted with black; the throat is marked with touches of reddish brown, black, and white; the breast is marked across with spots of black and brown; the comb is of an elegant yellow, and in the form of a half moon; under the neck-wings, there are spots of loose,

naked skin, about the size and colour of an orange; the tail is short, and of a pale brown.

What is the form of this Grous?

The form of the Pinnated Grous, as well as its colour, very much resemble those of the Partridge.

Where is this bird found?

This bird is found in several parts of the United States, but is scarce, and only inhabits particular places.

The figure of this bird is from Wilson. It is a male, and represented in the act of strutting. The neck-wings are raised up, so that the peculiar yellow spot under them is to be seen. The principal wings are partly spread, and pushed towards the ground, so as nearly to hide the legs. The head and tail are raised high, giving him on the whole a very proud, and pompous appearance.

Mr. Wilson states, that when he first saw a number of these birds, they were in the act of strutting, and that the figure they cut was so novel and singular, that instead of shooting at them, he took out his paper and drew the picture of one on the spot.

This Grous is very particular in the selection of its place of residence. Open, dry plains, with only a few trees on them, but which are overgrown with shrubs, are its favourite haunts. They are never found in high forests, nor in low marshy places. Probably the reason for this may be that they fly in a straight line, their wings not being calculated to make short turns among the trees of a thick forest. And, their food is not found in marshy ground, as it consists chiefly of the small acorns which grow on the shrub

oak, and of such berries as grow only on dry ground.

The Pinnated Grous, it is believed, never drinks from brooks or puddles of water, like other birds. In confinement, it will not drink from a cup, but when water is thrown on the cage, it will only sip the drops which trickle down on the bars. It is most probable, from this habit, that when in a wild state, this bird drinks only the drops of dew which it finds on plants.

These birds are much attached to the place where they take up their residence, and from year to year may be found within certain limited tracts of country, and perhaps no where else within hundreds of miles of that place. In such tracts they rear their young, range through their particular haunts, and, unless destroyed by the sportsman, die of old age, without once going beyond a circuit of a few miles.

A great peculiarity, which marks the appearance of this bird, are the yellow bags, or pouches, situated on the neck, and under the forward wings of the male. When he is at rest, this skin hangs loose, and in folds. But he has the power of filling them with air, and when this is done, they resemble, both in colour and size, a couple of oranges, fully ripe.

By means of these bags, when thus filled, he has the power of making a very peculiar noise, which may easily be imitated, but cannot be described by words. It may however be compared in tone to that made by the nighthawk, when he descends from his towering height towards the earth, but instead of one, it consists of three notes, the last of which is twice as long as the others. This noise may be heard on a still morning

three or four miles, and yet when it is made within a few rods of a person who had never heard it before, he would think it a mile or two off. This singular circumstance seems to be owing to the manner in which the noise is made, for as we have already stated, it is done by means of the two bags on each side of his neck; and it is probably by forcing the air from them through the wind pipe, and before it reaches the bill, that the sound is produced. In this respect, it resembles the tones made by men who are called ventriloquists, and who have the power of speaking with a voice so deep in the throat as to make it appear at a distance, though the person who makes it stands next to the hearer.

The Creator has made every tribe of birds as well as other animals, with some peculiar traits, which distinguish them from all other kinds, and by which each kind may be known as certainly as the features of the human face distinguish one person from another.

Each tribe, also, is endowed with such habits and shapes, as best fit them for the stations and places which they occupy. And we may observe, also, that each kind has a mode of escape, or of protection from their enemies, which is peculiar to themselves, and which is particularly adapted to their situation. In the Grous, a bird which cannot fly to a great distance, one mode of escape, is the power of uttering a sound so deceptive as to seem at a distance, when, in fact, it is quite near, and, at the same time, so loud, as to appear near, when it is several miles off. In this manner the hunter is deceived and misled, and knows not where to look for his game, and thus the bird escapes.

This wonderful contrivance is singularly well adapted to a bird, like the Grous, which, by its habits, is confined within narrow limits, so that the sportsman can know pretty nearly where it is to be found.

We cannot but admire the benevolence of the Creator in thus forming a poor bird with such singular and wonderful means of escaping from its enemies.

The males of these curious birds have a practice of assembling together, for the purpose of holding what may be very properly called a *strutting match.*

The spot which they select for these struttings must be clear of bushes, and is generally a small open place, as much retired from the observation of the world as possible. Towards the dawn of day, the company begin to assemble, and sometimes the party consists of forty or fifty members. When it begins to grow light, one or two of them begin to make the peculiar noise already described, when those who are absent appear, one after another, from the surrounding bushes. The ceremony then begins, and each member struts according to the best of his ability; every one trying to outdo the others in affected pomp and stateliness. Sometimes, as two pass each other, they exchange looks of insult and defiance, probably because the one sees that the other looks as well as himself. These looks often lead to desperate battles, in which both parties engage with great spirit and fierceness, and sometimes they continue to fight until the rising of the sun, which is always the signal for the party to break up, each one then going his own way.

The places where these birds hold such exhibitions are sometimes discovered by the marks of their feet in

the dirt, and the feathers left on the ground, and this is a sad discovery for the poor Grous, as it generally ends in the death of some of the party.

The sportsman who finds such a place, goes in the day time and builds for himself a hiding place of bushes near the spot, and on the next morning takes care to be in it, before the dawn of day. The poor Grous, not suspecting any mischief, go to the place and begin their sports as usual, when the gunner shoots among them and destroys as many as he can.

Among sportsmen, whether they go out for profit, or amusement, and also among the lovers of delicate morsels, there is no bird more sought after, or more famous than the Grous. On this account, they have of late years become exceedingly rare, so that in the city of New York, a pair not uncommonly sells for five dollars.

The female Grous makes her nest on the ground, but is so sly about the place, that it is rarely discovered. She leads her brood out in search of provisions, like the common hen, and, like her, takes care of the family without any assistance from the male.

These birds cannot be tamed, for on hatching their eggs under a hen, it is found that the young ones make their escape into the woods as soon as they can fly.*

* See Wilson's Ornithology.

THE PARTRIDGE.

[*This bird in the Southern States is called Pheasant.*]

How large is the Partridge?

The Partridge is a foot and a half long, and nearly two feet in extent, with the wings spread.

What is its colour?

On the back, upper part of the wings, and neck, it is spotted, or variegated with black, reddish brown, pale brown, and white; on each side of the neck there is a large black spot; a broad black stripe runs across the tail, on each side of which there is a narrow one of pale blue; the under parts are pale blue spotted with brown.

Where is the Partridge found?

This bird is found in all parts of the United States.

Of what use is this bird?

The Partridge is of considerable use as an article of food. During the fall, and beginning of winter, great numbers of them are taken, either in traps, or snares, and carried to market.

This beautiful bird lives chiefly among mountains, covered with evergreen trees, such as the pine, hemlock and laurel. Its place of residence is entirely different from that of the grous. The Partridge loves thick shady places, which are cool in summer, and warm in winter, while the grous prefers open, barren, plains, where it is hot in summer and cold in winter. The grous is never found on the ground occupied by the Partridge, nor is the Partridge often seen on the plains with the grous.

The habits of the Partridge are very solitary, there being seldom found more than four or five together,

and more commonly only one or two are seen at a time.

Every one who lives in the neighbourhood of these birds, has heard the noise which they make with their wings, and which is called *drumming*. This noise is often mistaken for the low rumbling of distant thunder, and may be heard, in a calm morning, at the distance of a mile, or more. It is made only by the male, who, seated on some fallen tree, strikes his wings on each side of it, at first slowly, and distinctly, after which the strokes are quickened, and become so rapid as to run into each other, resembling the rolling of a drum. It is singular that a person even after hearing the Partridge drum many times, cannot form a correct judgment of its distance from him, it always being further off than he suspects. Gunners who do not well know the habits of this bird, often think they have their game quite near, when in fact it is half a mile, or more, from them.

The Partridge makes her nest on the ground, and, like other birds of this kind, takes very little care about its construction. A few dry leaves in some concealed place, are all that she requires.

As soon as the young are hatched, they leave the nest, under the direction of their mother, in search of food; and it is quite interesting and curious to observe the early habits of these little creatures. If the mother happens to be surprised at the head of her family, she instantly utters a note of alarm, which is as instantly understood and obeyed by them all; for in a second or two, every one conceals itself so cunningly among the leaves, that it is rare one can be found.

While the young are doing this, the old bird acts her part to admiration. She tumbles, or rolls along on the ground, and pretends that her wings and legs are broken, so that the person, instead of searching for the young, is made to believe he can, in the first place, catch the mother without difficulty. When she has led the intruder a few rods from h er young in this way, she all at once takes wing, and is out of sight in a moment.

The Partridge does not, like most of our birds, migrate into a warmer climate during the winter, but is a constant inhabitant among us.

Mr. Wilson relates a curious anecdote of one of these birds. While walking in the woods, he started a mother with only a single young one, which appeared to be only a few days old. The old bird fluttered before him as usual, for a moment, and then, as though she recollected a surer way of saving her young, suddenly flew back, and seizing it with her bill, to his astonishment, rose above the woods, and with great rapidity and steadiness, flew out of his sight with it in her mouth.

This, continues Mr. Wilson, was a striking instance of something more than what is termed blind instinct. The bird acted as the circumstances required. To carry away a whole brood in this manner at once, would have been impossible, and to attempt to save one and leave the others, would have been unnatural. She therefore usually takes the only possible mode of saving a whole brood, by feigning herself lame and unable to fly, so as to attract the attention of the person who intrudes upon her. But in the present in-

stance, having only a single young one, she altered her plan, and adopted the most simple and effectual mode of saving it.

This bird is not easily seen while sitting still among the leaves, and of this she seems to be aware, for she will permit a person, if not seen herself, to come within a few yards of her, before she flies. But if seen, and the person skulks along shyly, now and then giving her a look, she will commonly fly before he gets near her.

In other respects, the Partridge, particularly when young, is so silly as not to make use of the most common means of escape. When a brood, which are just old enough to fly, are started, they usually rise up and light on the nearest tree, and there sit, particularly if much noise is made below, until each one in turn, is shot down by the sportsman. They seem to be so amazed, both at the noise, and at seeing each other fall, as not to have the power of moving. The flesh of this bird has the finest flavour in the months of September and October, when they feed on chesnuts and partridge berries. The latter, which are also known under the name of winter-green berries, give their flesh a peculiarly fine flavour.

The Partridge is twice mentioned in the sacred scriptures.

When David expostulated with Saul, concerning his cruel and unjust conduct towards him, and particularly his pursuit of him from place to place, he says; "The king of Israel is come out to seek a flea, as when one doth hunt a Partridge, in the mountains," First of Samuel, chap. 26, verse 20.

In the East, as these birds cannot fly very far without lighting, it is said they are hunted, by watching the spot where they light, and then suddenly starting them again; and that by doing this several times, they become so fatigued as to be taken without difficulty. even with the hand.

It is probable, that it is to this mode of hunting them, the allusion is made; and it strikingly represents the defenceless condition of David, and the humble and lowly opinion he had of himself. He was as innocent before Saul, as this harmless bird was before the hunter, and as incapable of resisting his cruel enemy, except by the interposition of the Almighty, as the Partridge is of standing against the force of its pursuer. But David trusted in God for protection and safety, against all the power of his cruel enemy; and in this he was not disappointed, for the Almighty delivered him unhurt from all the snares of his pursuer.

The other passage where this bird is mentioned, is in Jeremiah, chapter 17, and verse 11, and is in allusion to the curse which attends riches, when obtained by fraud or oppression. "As the Partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and his end shall be a fool."

The Partridge lays her eggs on the ground, and, as we have already stated, takes very little pains in the construction of her nest. When she begins to sit, her instinct teaches her to expect a large brood, but it often happens, that by reason of the rain, or some other

misfortune, few of her eggs produce young birds, and thus she sets without hatching, and is disappointed.

So it is with men who gain wealth by unjust means. They for a time, perhaps, may enjoy themselves, and are looking forward for much happiness in the world ; but even in this life, such people are often disappointed. They brood over their ill-gotten riches, and are in constant fear, lest they should, in one way or another, be taken from them. Their consciences accuse them of having been guilty of fraud, and they are in continual apprehension that some circumstance will suddenly reveal to the world their dishonesty. Thus riches, when obtained by fraud, or oppression, become the cause of misery, instead of being a source of comfort and happiness.

Then let us always remember, " that honesty is the best policy," and that we had much better be poor and happy, than rich and miserable. Let us also remember, that if dishonest gain is often a source of trouble and misery in this world, it will be still more so in the world to come, for on the great day of account, all our secret frauds will not only be published to the assembled universe, but we shall be punished according to the deeds done in the body.

THE QUAIL.

[*In some parts of America, this bird is called Partridge.*]

How large is the Quail?

The Quail is nine inches long, and fourteen inches in extent, with the wings spread.

What is its colour?

Its general colour is reddish brown, spotted with black; over the eyes and running down the neck there is a patch of white; the breast, and under parts, are pale yellow, spotted with black; the throat is white, and the legs pale ash colour.

Where is this bird found?

The Quail is an inhabitant of the United States from Canada to Florida. It is also found in almost every part of Europe.

Of what use is the Quail?

This bird is much esteemed as an article of food. In autumn and at the beginning of winter, it is very fat and plump, and is then considered a delicacy for the table.

The particular places where Quails love to reside, are not among the mountains, like the partridge, nor on the barren plains, with the grous, but about cultivated fields, and in open places around the borders of woodlands. Sometimes they venture even to the barn yard, where they feed with the poultry, and if not frightened away, will become so tame as to pick up corn when thrown them.

These poor birds are, however, every where persecuted and destroyed; not on account of the mischief they do, but because their flesh is a delicate morsel to the taste of man. No wild bird of equal value is so easily taken. Their simplicity, and want of suspicion, lead them into traps and snares, which the more cunning and sagacious of the feathered race take care to shun. Almost every boy in the country, during the fall and winter, is armed with a gun, or the more insidious Quail trap, for their destruction; and did they

not multiply in great numbers, it is not easy to see why the whole race would not be exterminated.

Quails build their nests about walls, or fences, or in the open fields, under a bush, or thick tuft of grass; and in its construction they employ more industry than most birds of this kind. The materials are dry grass, and the nest is covered over on the top, to secure it from the rain. In front there is a door way, or entrance for the bird.

Quails lay from twelve to twenty-four eggs; and as soon as the young crawl out of their shells, they are ready to follow their mother in search of flies, and small insects for food.

Should a person surprise this beautiful little family, he could not but be interested to observe the art which both mother and young employ to escape from harm. The old bird, like the partridge, makes use of false pretences, to gain the attention of the intruder, but it is done in a still more artful manner. She pretends by her actions, that she is not only sorely wounded, and unable to get out of the way, but that her case is desperate; for she imitates the dying state so well, that one can hardly help thinking the poor bird is actually at the point of death. While the person is admiring such a specimen of instinctive art in the old bird, or trying to catch her, the young dive into the grass, and lie so close, that it is rare one of them can be found; while the mother, the moment she thinks them safe, no longer pretends distress, but takes wing and is out of sight. As soon as all danger is over she goes back, and utters her call, when in a few minutes she is again surrounded by her family all alive and

well. Thus do these innocent birds escape by means of the instinctive sagacity with which the Creator has kindly endowed them.

Young Quails when hatched under a hen, soon learn the call of their adopted mother, and though more apt to stray away and get lost than other chickens, still they often, for the first season, become so tame as to run for their food with the others, when called. But however tame they may become during the first winter, they uniformly make their escape in the spring, and never return. Mr. Wilson gives an account of two of these birds, which were hatched under a hen, and which when weaned by her, associated with the cows. They regularly followed these animals to the pasture, in the morning, and returned with them at evening, and always staid by, while they were milked. In the winter they took up their residence in the stable with the cows, but as soon as spring appeared, they flew away, and were not seen afterwards.

Common chickens, when hatched by a Quail, will partake of her manners and habits; the effect being just the contrary of that produced by hatching the Quail under a hen.

Mr. Wilson tells us that a friend of his made an experiment by putting some hens' eggs under a Quail while she was sitting, first taking away her eggs, when she was absent. She hatched them all, and for several weeks afterwards he often saw the brood, and observed the conduct, both of the chickens, and their mother-in-law. The old Quail on such occasions behaved in the usual manner, pretending to be wounded, and tumbling along on the ground. But it was par-

ticularly interesting to observe the manners of the young chickens. They had adopted all the shyness, and timidity of young Quails; running with great rapidity, and concealing themselves as young Quails do, among the grass. Even when they were larger than the Quail herself, they continued to follow her and obey her commands. Thus it appears that birds of different kinds, when hatched and brought up by each other, can understand each others' language. For that they have a kind of language there is no doubt, otherwise, the young could not understand the calls or warnings of their mothers.

Quails are gregarious birds, associating in flocks, or coveys, of from five or six, to thirty or forty.—In this country they remain all the year, only migrating from one part to another, as the seasons change. In other parts of the world they migrate from one country to another, going and coming at stated times, like the stork and other birds. In some countries these birds have occasionally appeared in such vast flocks as to cover the ground with their numbers, and destroy all the grain in a neighbourhood. In Egypt, and on the borders of the Red Sea, the inhabitants at particular seasons live almost entirely on them. And in the kingdom of Naples, one hundred thousand Quails have been taken in a day, within a space of a few miles. In the south of Russia, at the time of their migration, they abound in such numbers, that they are taken by thousands, and sent in casks to the cities for sale.

Quails are birds of the most undaunted courage, their quarrels frequently terminating in the death of one or both the parties. Among the ancient Greeks and Ro-

mans, they were trained up to fight each other, and sometimes large sums of money were foolishly bet on the result of a battle between a pair of these poor little birds.

The Quail is twice mentioned in Scripture, and in both instances, it is spoken of as being miraculously sent to the children of Israel for food.

The first instance occurred soon after they left Egypt, and before any settled mode of supplying them with food had been adopted. The people did not consider this circumstance, nor did they rely on the goodness of the Almighty, who had delivered them from the bondage of the Egyptians, but complained bitterly, and accused Moses and Aaron of bringing them into the wilderness that they might perish with hunger. They said, "Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord, in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill the whole assembly with hunger." Exodus, chapter 16, verse 3.

Such murmurings might justly have drawn down some terrible vengeance upon their heads; for, having in so many instances witnessed the mercy of the Almighty towards them, it was their duty to trust in him for their deliverance. But instead of punishment for their sins, the Lord kindly bestowed on them, by a miracle, what they did not deserve, an abundant supply of food. Moses was commanded to speak to them and say, "At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God: and it came to pass

that at even the Quails came up and covered the camp." Exodus, chapter 16, verse 12.

This was in the spring of the year, when these birds, in their yearly migrations from Asia to Europe, are found in vast numbers on the coast of the Mediterranean, and Red Sea. It is most probable therefore that the miracle consisted in the direction of the Quails to the camp of the Israelites, and not in their creation, as was the case with the manna which came down from Heaven.

In the other instance the guilt of this people was more aggravated, and was followed by a dreadful judgment from Heaven. The Lord had supplied the children of Israel during their journey through the wilderness, with manna, in such abundance, that every person was in health, there not being a sickly one among all the tribes. But they had become dissatisfied with that food and began again to murmur for flesh, so that the Lord once more commanded Moses to tell them that flesh should be provided. "And there went forth a wind from the Lord, and brought Quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp, as it were a day's journey on this side, and as it were a day's journey on the other side, round about the camp, and as it were two cubits high upon the face of the earth." Numbers, chapter 11, verse 31.

This was at the same season of the year, as that on which the other miracle was wrought, and therefore during the yearly migration of these birds.

The vast numbers of them which were supplied on this occasion, will appear from the next verse. "The people stood up all that day, and all that night, and all

the next day, and they gathered the Quails; he that gathered least had ten homers, and they spread them all abroad for themselves round about the camp."

So little do we know what is best for ourselves, that we often ask for things, which if they are granted us, prove in the end to be the greatest of evils. This was the case with the children of Israel in this great supply of meat. They would not be satisfied with the manna, which preserved them in the finest health, so that not one was sick; but they must indulge their appetites, and did not cease to murmur until they had abundance of flesh.

But a dreadful disease followed this indulgence, as a punishment for their having murmured against God, when he was providing for them every thing they needed. "The wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fattest of them, and smote down the chosen men of Israel." Psalm 68, verse 31.

Let us then, when we have a sufficiency of the good things of this world, and above all, when we are in health, be contented, and not murmur against God because we cannot indulge in needless luxuries; remembering that if they were in our power, they might be the occasion of disease or even death, as the Quails were to the children of Israel.

THE THRUSH.

Birds of the Thrush kind have bills nearly straight, but bending a little towards the end. They feed upon berries and insects. Some of them are among the

best singers of the feathered race. The Mocking Bird is of the Thrush kind.

THE MOCKING BIRD.

How large is the Mocking Bird?

The Mocking Bird is nine inches long, and with its wings spread, thirteen inches in extent.

What is the colour of this bird?

Its colour, along the upper part of the neck, and down the back, is ash brown; the tail and wings are nearly black, and the throat, and under parts, white.

Where is the Mocking Bird found?

This bird is found in most parts of America, from New England to Brazil.

Why is this called the Mocking Bird?

The name of this bird very properly expresses its principal quality, that of mocking, or imitating the songs and notes of other birds.

This bird is a native of America, and in its wild state is no where else to be found. As a natural, and untaught songster, it stands unrivalled among the feathered creation; there being no bird capable of uttering such a variety of tones, or of giving equal entertainment to an audience.

The Mocking Bird builds her nest on some tree not far from the habitations of men. Sometimes an apple tree standing alone answers her purpose, and she places it not far from the ground. But if these birds are not careful to conceal their habitation, the male is always ready to defend it; for neither cat, dog, man, nor any other animal can come near, while the female is setting, without meeting with a sudden and violent attack. The cat, in particular, is an object of the most

inveterate hatred, and is tormented with such repeated assaults, as generally to make her escape without delay.

The black snake is another deadly enemy, and when found lurking about the nest, is sure to meet with a sound drubbing, and does well to come off even with this; for the male sometimes darts upon it with such fury, and strikes it on the head with such force, as to leave it dead on the field of battle.

Having destroyed his enemy, this courageous bird flies to the tree which contains his nest, and his companion, and seating himself on the highest branch, pours forth his best song in token of victory.

Although the plumage of the Mocking Bird is not so beautiful as that of many others, his slim and well made figure entitles him to a respectable standing for looks among his feathered brethren. But it is not his appearance, but his song, that raises him so high in the estimation of man, and fixes his value above that of almost any other bird.

A stranger who hears this songster for the first time, listens to him with perfect astonishment. His voice is clear, strong, full, and of such compass as to enable him to imitate the notes of every other bird he has ever heard. He also has a most remarkable memory, for when there is not another songster in his hearing, he will recollect and repeat the songs of nearly every bird in the forest. This he does with such truth, passing from one song to another, with such surprising rapidity, that one who did not see him, and know the secret, would believe that half the feathered creation had assembled to hold a musical festival. Nor

do the notes of his brother songsters lose any of their sweetness or brilliancy by such repetition. On the contrary, most of the tones are sweeter and better, than those of the birds which are imitated.

Sometimes the Mocking Bird deceives and provokes the sportsman by imitating the notes of the game he is in pursuit of, and thus leading him the wrong way. Sometimes also, he brings many other birds around him by counterfeiting the soft tones of their mates, or by imitating the call of the old ones for their young; and then, perhaps, he will throw them into the most terrible alarm by screaming out like a hawk.

One who has never heard this bird, after all that can be said, will have but a faint idea of his powers. He will perhaps begin with the song of the robin, then whistle like a quail, then squall like a cat bird, then twitter like a swallow, and so on, running through the notes of every bird in the woods, with surprising truth and rapidity.

When tamed, he mocks every sound he hears with equal exactness, and it is often very amusing to witness the effect of this deception. He whistles for the dog; the dog jumps up, wags his tail, and runs to look for his master. He peeps like a hurt chicken; and the old hen runs clucking to see who has injured her brood. He mews like a kitten, and mother puss harkens, and stares to find where the noise comes from, and many other things of this kind he does to perfection.

The Mocking Bird is much esteemed by those who are fond of such amusements, and in most of our large cities they are kept for sale by the dealers in birds.

The price for common singers is from ten to twenty dollars. For fine singers from thirty to fifty dollars, and for very extraordinary ones even a hundred dollars has been refused.

When we walk out into the woods, how are we cheered with the songs, and gratified with the sight of the birds which surround us. The green grass, the beautiful flowers, and the tall trees of the forest, it is true, are pleasant to the sight. But these are inanimate; they preserve a dead and perpetual silence. They gratify the eye, but the ear would be left untouched, and the charms of nature but half complete without the feathered songsters. When we walk alone through the solitary forest, they become our companions, and seem to take pleasure in displaying their beauties, and raising their best notes for our amusement.

Thus, the fowls of the air, by the benevolence of the Creator, add to our pleasures, and lighten our hearts. What child, then, can be so selfish, and ungrateful, as to enjoy these pleasures without thinking WHO it is, he ought to thank for them.

It is to "our Father in heaven," that we are to give thanks for the innocent pleasures we enjoy, as well as for the more necessary provision of our daily bread.

THE SWALLOW.

The Swallow tribe have short bills, which are broad at the root, sharp at the end, and a little hooked: their tails are forked; their legs short, and in most of them, the toes are placed three forward and one backward. Their wings are long, and they fly with wonderful swiftness. Besides the several kinds of Swallows, known by that name, the Marten, and some others belong to this tribe.

THE MARTEN.

How large a bird is the Marten?

The Marten is considerably larger than the Swallow, being eight inches long, and, with the wings spread, sixteen inches in extent.

What colour is this bird?

The wings and tail are brownish black, the other parts are of a purplish blue, very deep and rich. In the sun beautiful violet reflections are thrown out from the neck and breast.

What is the shape of the Marten?

In shape, this bird resembles the others of the swallow kind. The body, legs, and bill are short, the wings long; the tail forked; and the eyes full and dark.

These innocent birds are well known throughout the country, and are general favorites wherever they take up their residence.

Like all the swallow tribe, they migrate on the approach of winter to a warmer climate, and make their appearance again sometime in the month of April, when they are hailed with a hearty welcome. *The*

Martens are come! is always a piece of news that is heard with pleasure, and generally every child runs out, to satisfy himself of its truth.

This agreeable bird always takes up its summer residence about the habitations of men, and its confidence and familiarity are generally a protection against injury. There is scarcely a boy, however fond he may be of his gun, who will shoot a Marten. Such an act of depravity, indeed, would be considered in most neighbourhoods too base and cruel to be soon forgotten.

The inhabitants of the forest, and the poor labouring slave, as well as the refined people of the world, agree in offering hospitality to the Marten.

It is common, Mr. Wilson tells us, among several tribes of Indians, to cut off the upper branches of a tree near their cabins, leaving their prongs a foot or two long, and to hang a hollow gourd shell to each prong for these birds to build their nests in. And, on the banks of the Mississippi, the negroes set up long canes with a box on the top, for the same purpose. It is common, indeed, in all parts of our country, for people to set up some sort of accommodation for this favourite bird.

Their mode of building is too well known to need description. They commonly repair their nest from year to year, and, unless their box is torn down, continue to rear their young in the same place, from one generation to another.

While the female is setting on her eggs, the male is very attentive to her, visiting her many times in the day, and frequently taking her place, while she goes

abroad for exercise and food. When he comes home after an excursion, he always goes directly to the nest, and looks in to see how she does, and on such occasions, their notes are particularly soft and tender.

These birds always unite in pairs, and are so attached to each other, that if a third comes, they will both attack and drive it away.

The Marten is a bird of great courage, and does not hesitate to attack the crow, or hawk, if they come too near his nest. On such occasions, many of them unite for the general defence, and do not give up the battle until the enemy is driven out of the neighbourhood.

The wren often troubles the Marten in a most impertinent and provoking manner. Being the smaller bird, they take advantage of the Marten's absence, to fill up the passage to his nest, so that when the owner comes home, he finds his door shut against him, and his house occupied by another family. Sometimes also, these impudent little warriors will attack the Martens, and drive them out by main force; or tease them until, for their own comfort, they give them up their property, and go to another place and build anew. In the following instance, however, it appears that the Martens were too cunning, even for the wren.

A couple of Martins had, for several years, occupied a certain cage, which was fixed on the side of the house. One day these birds were observed to be in a state of great agitation and alarm. They would fly to the cage, but in a moment leave it again, as though afraid to go in, at the same time uttering cries of alarm and dread. On watching their motions, and looking at the cage, to find out the cause of this trou-

ble, a pair of wrens were observed to come out of it, and, after giving themselves a few airs of importance, and triumph, flew away. The Martens took this opportunity of returning to the cage, but their stay was short, for the wrens came back in a few minutes, and drove them away.

This squabbling for the right of possession, continued most of the day, but on the following morning, when the wrens quitted the cage, the Martins instantly, and as though they had before agreed what to do, entered it, and went to work with all their might, to break up their nest. It might have been thought, that out of spite to the wrens, they intended to destroy their nest, so that it should be of no use to them. But this did not prove to be any part of their plan. Having broken up the nest, they began to pile up the pieces, so as to fill the door of their cage; and such was the ingenuity and industry with which this was done, that it was soon made proof against the entrance of their little enemies. The Martens stood inside, and when the wrens came, they tried to force a passage, but found the place too strong for them. For nearly two days did this heroic pair defend themselves without a mouthful of provisions, while the wrens on the outside pressed the siege with great vigour, trying to beat down their works, so as to gain an entrance. Finding, at last, that their force was not sufficient for such an enterprise, they abandoned the place, and left the Martens in possession of their property, though somewhat injured by the war.

THE BARN SWALLOW.

The colour of this well known little bird along the back, is steel blue; the wings and tail are black, and the under parts brownish red. Its length is seven inches, and with its wings spread, it is thirteen inches in extent.

The Swallow inhabits almost every part of the world. In this country it migrates as the seasons change, leaving us in the fall, and returning again in the spring.

Just before these birds disappear, they assemble in vast flocks, and settle on the tops of houses and trees, and particularly on the steeples of churches. From these places they take their flight, and in the course of a day or two after they begin to assemble, not a single one is to be seen.

The sudden manner in which they disappear, together with the fact that flocks of them are seen about mill ponds, before they set out on their journey, has made some people believe, that Swallows go into the mud, and there lie in a torpid state during the winter. In proof of this it is said that these birds have been found under the water at the bottoms of ponds in the winter, and that on warming them, they have revived from their torpid state, and flown away.

It is believed, however, that these birds are incapable of living under the water, and therefore that such stories must be without foundation. The extreme rapidity with which they fly, would enable them to pass from one country to another, in a very short time while the manner in which they live, that of catching

insects in the air, and eating them while on the wing, would make it unnecessary for them to stop on their journey for the purpose of obtaining food.

Flocks of them have been seen far at sea; and sometimes during a storm, they have become so fatigued with their journey as to light, and rest awhile on some part of the vessel.

From all northern countries, these birds take their flight towards the south, in time to reach a warm climate before the approach of winter. The time of leaving, therefore, depends on the distance they have to fly. In New England, they leave about the middle of September, but in Florida, they remain until the last of that month, or the beginning of October.

They are said to arrive in Africa the first week in October, and to leave England the last week in September; so that they perform the journey from one country to the other in a week's time.

The Swallow is a pattern of the most unwearied and laborious industry. From morning till night, when these birds have a family to maintain, they spend their whole time in skimming along near the ground in search of insects for their young. At these times, they always fly with their mouths wide open, and when they catch an insect, a smart snap of the bill, may be heard, like the shutting of a watch-case.

This bird builds her nest in barns or other out-houses. It is constructed of mud, which is used in so soft a state, as to adhere to the side of a barn, or board. The inside is lined with dry grass, with a covering of feathers, for the young birds to lie on.

Professor Kalm relates the following anecdote of a Swallow, which he had from good authority.

A couple of Swallows built their nest in a stable, and the female, having laid her eggs, was about to sit on them. At this time, the male was seen flying about the nest in great agitation, and was heard to utter cries of distress. On going to the nest, the female was found dead, but still sitting on her eggs, and was taken out and thrown away. The male then went himself, and sat on the eggs ; but after remaining there two or three hours, and perhaps finding the confinement disagreeable to him, he went away, and was sometime absent. When he returned, he brought with him another female, who took the place of the dead bird, sat upon the eggs, hatched them, and afterwards fed the young birds until they could provide for themselves.

The Swallow is mentioned several times in the Holy Scriptures, and in each passage there is a reference to some part of its natural history.

In the 84th Psalm, the sacred writer has a beautiful allusion to the habit this bird has of building her nest about the dwellings of mankind. "Yea the sparrow hath found an house, and the Swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my king and my God."

This Psalm is thought to have been written at the time when David was obliged to flee before his unnatural son Absalom. In this state of exile from his home, and from the house of God, he remembered that the sparrows and swallows were permitted to build their nests about the tabernacle ; and he seems to have en-

vied these birds the privilege of being near that holy place, without being sensible of it, while he, notwithstanding his ardent attachment to that sanctuary, was denied the blessing of attending there.

Pious people, who are blessed with the privilege of constantly attending worship at the house of God, are often insensible of such a blessing, until they are by some means deprived of it. This seems, in some degree, to have been the case with David during his absence, for in another verse he says, "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they will still be praising thee."

But the holy Psalmist, because he could not possess all his soul desired, did not therefore lie down in forgetfulness of the former mercies he had received; but while he pleaded that God would hear him, was, at the same time, willing to own his constant goodness and mercy, for in the same chapter he says, "O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer, give ear O God of Jacob: behold O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed." "For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory, no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."

In Jeremiah, 8th chapter and 7th verse, there is an allusion to the return of the Swallow, after her annual migration to the south for the winter. This shews that the habits of this bird have not changed since the days of the prophet, and that they were the same at that time, and in that country, as they are at present in this, and other countries; for every where the Swallow changes its place of residence with the change of seasons. The verse is as follows: "Yea the stork in the heavens knoweth her appointed time; and the tur-

tle, and the crane, and the Swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgement of the Lord."

What a reproof this to disobedient, wicked man. The birds of the air, by their natural instinct, are enabled to know and perform their duty. They go and come, and rear their young at fixed times and places, and for thousands of years have never been known to fail of doing so. But man, notwithstanding his accountability to God for all his actions, and after the offers of mercy on the one hand, and the threatenings of vengeance on the other, still disobeys his Maker.—"My people know not the judgements of the Lord."

THE NIGHT HAWK.

How large is the Night Hawk?

The Night Hawk is nine inches long, and when the wings are spread, nearly two feet in extent.

What colour is this bird?

The colour of the back, and upper parts, is of a deep blackish brown; on the wings, and about the head and neck, this colour is spotted with yellow; the tail and quill feathers are nearly black, with a streak of white across each.

What is the shape of the Night Hawk?

In shape, this bird is short and thick; the head and eyes are large, but the bill is so short and small as only just to reach beyond the head; the mouth is very deep, opening almost to the eyes; the legs are short, and feathered to the knee.

Where is this bird found?

The Night Hawk is an inhabitant of all parts of the United States, and is well known from Canada to Florida.

This bird by many is supposed to be the same with the whip-poor-will. But this is a mistake; for though there is a resemblance between the two in appearance, in their habits they differ materially. The whip-poor-will is seen very rarely, and then only in the woods, where it flies only a short distance, when started, and lights again suddenly on a rock, or fallen tree. It is a bird of night, and does not fly about in the day time. The Night Hawk, though most commonly seen at the dusk of evening, is not so far a night bird as to be unable to fly in the day time, but is often seen at noon day, flying slowly along high in the air.

There is also a difference which will distinguish these two birds at once, when taken. The whip-poor-will has a kind of beard, consisting of many long hairs, which grow out of the inside of the upper mandible.—The Night Hawk has nothing of this kind.

The Night Hawk is a bird of very peculiar manners and habits, and on these accounts is easily known from the other fowls of the air.

They are birds of passage, and commonly appear in New England about the beginning of May. They are then seen only in the evening, flying high in the air, and apparently pursuing their prey, which consists of insects.

Sometime in May the female lays her eggs; but contrary to the practice of nearly every other land

bird, she takes no trouble about a nest, and deposites them on the bare ground, or on a solid rock.

Such conduct might seem to shew a want of common sense, or of proper care for her future brood.—But instead of this, it displays in this bird an uncommon degree of sagacity. The spot on which the eggs are laid is always dry, and a little higher than the ground around it, so that in case of rain, they may not be covered by the water.

The place seems also to be selected with reference to the colour of the bird, and of her eggs. The bird is dark, spotted with yellow, so that a few sticks or leaves around her would make the whole appear much of the same colour. The eggs are green, spotted with black, and can hardly be distinguished from the ground on which they lie, at a yard's distance. Indeed, the place is chosen with so much judgement, and the deception so complete, that it is not uncommon, when one is walking near her nest, to be startled by her flying up from almost under his feet, without his having before discovered that any living creature was near him. She seems to be aware that her nest is less likely to be found if she sits still, than if she flies away; and hence, although at other times a wild bird, will remain on it, until nearly in danger of being trodden under foot.

When obliged to fly, her sagacity is still striking, and often effectual in saving her eggs. Instead of darting away like most other birds, she acts as though she could neither fly nor run, but tumbles and rolls along within a yard or two of the person, and pretends that this is the best she can do. One not ac-

quainted with the deception, will run after the bird, not doubting but he can catch her in a moment; but she takes care to just keep out of his way, until she leads him a good distance from the nest, when she takes wing, and in a moment is out of sight. The attention of the person is so taken with the bird, that he seldom thinks of the eggs until she is out of sight, and then it is too late, for he might search for hours, and then only find them, when they were crushed under his feet.

The young birds, when hatched, are not more easily seen than the eggs, or the old one. They are covered with down of a pale brownish colour; and look so much like a little clod of mouldy dirt, that a person would never suspect that they were living creatures until he touched them.

Perhaps there is not a more striking instance of the effect of instinct in protecting its possessor from harm, in the whole feathered creation, than is displayed by this bird; and it is doubted whether even man himself, under the same circumstances, could point out any surer means of effecting the same end.

Having no arms with which to protect itself, and being destined by nature to lay on the ground, this bird, as well as her eggs, would be peculiarly exposed to destruction, did she not make use of all the means in her power to prevent it.

Birds, as well as other animals, are taught by the God of Nature to take care of their young; and as one means of protection, they are taught by instinct where, and how to build their nests, so as to make them as

safe from the approach of man and other animals as possible.

The place where the nest is built, and the manner of its construction, seem however, always to depend on the other habits of the bird. Thus the martin, by its innocence and familiarity, so attaches itself to man, as to be safe in building about houses, and in cities; but birds which are less agreeable and more mischievous, are obliged to retire into the woods, and rear their young out of the way of man. Some build in the tops of the tallest trees, where it is difficult for man, or other animals to climb to them; others lay their eggs in hollow trees; others conceal their nests so that there is little probability of their being found, and others again hang them at the end of a small twig on a tall tree. In all these cases, there is evidently a plan to keep the eggs and young, as much as possible, out of the way of danger. But the Night Hawk makes use of a plan quite different from any of these. Her feet are not made for perching on the limbs of trees, nor are her habits such as to admit of her seeking refuge among men. She is destined to lay upon the ground, and she takes the very best means in her power to protect herself and her eggs in such a situation.

She seems to be perfectly aware that her colour is her best protection, if she makes a proper use of it, and hence she lays and hatches her eggs, in a place, the colour of which is so much like her own, that the difference cannot easily be distinguished, so that she may sit plain in sight and still not be seen.

In thus giving the fowls of the air the capacity of adapting themselves to their several situations, and of

protecting themselves and their progeny from destruction, the wisdom and goodness of the Creator are plainly manifest. Did they not possess this power, some kinds would soon be entirely destroyed, and thus the design for which they were created never fulfilled.

That the Creator has condescended to endow the birds of the air with such striking qualities, ought to operate as a convincing proof on our minds, that he is every where, and at all times present, and that he guides, directs, and governs all parts of his creation.

The actions of this bird, as seen in the air, are very singular, and it is impossible to say for what purpose he behaves in such a manner.

At evening he may be seen, particularly over rivers, or marshy places, mounted very high over head, flying, first with several quick motions of the wings, and then with a few slow ones, then with the quick motions again, and so, alternately. At the same time ke keeps going up higher and higher, now and then uttering a harsh peeping sound, which may often be heard when the bird is not seen. Having arrived at the highest pitch, he instantly turns head downwards, and descends with great rapidity, nearly to the ground, when he wheels suddenly up again, at the same time turning the points of his wings downwards, in form of the new moon, and making a noise resembling that produced by blowing strongly into the bung of an empty hogshead. He then ascends upward, with the usual slow and quick motions of his wings, and then down again as before.

The female makes the harsh peeping noise in the same manner with the male; she also flies with the

same alternate slow and quick motions of the wings, but never like him precipitates herself, in the manner above described.

THE SPARROW.

The Sparrow kind have short bills, which are large at the root, and sharp pointed. They live chiefly on seeds and insects—are generally small in size, but very active. To this tribe belong the Canary bird, the Gold Finch, the House Sparrow, and many others.

THE HOUSE SPARROW.

How large is the House Sparrow?

The House Sparrow is a little more than five inches long, and about eight inches in extent with the wings spread.

What colour is this bird?

Its colour, over the eyes, and about the chin, is whitish; crown of the head, and down the neck, chesnut brown; breast and sides of the neck, pale ash colour; the bill in winter is black, but in summer the lower mandible is ash coloured; the back is spotted with black and chesnut; wings, black, edged with chesnut; tail, nearly black, edged with yellow.

Where is this Sparrow found?

This little bird is found in every part of the United States, and in most parts of Europe.

This Sparrow is generally known in this country by the name of chipping bird. It is by habit so tame and familiar, as frequently to come into the yard, and if well treated, will hop about the door and pick up the

crumbs. Every child is acquainted with this innocent little bird. Some children love to feed it, and if they will do this every day, it will become so tame as to come into the house after its meal of bread crumbs.

The sociable and familiar habits of this bird continue only during the summer season. In the fall it is not seen about houses, but goes away into the fields and hedges, where it stays until the approach of winter, when it departs to the south to find a warmer climate. The House Sparrow builds her nest in some thick bush, preferring the cedar bush to all others. The nest is made of dry grass, and lined with hair, which it costs her a great deal of labour to pick up.

For a day or two after the young birds are hatched, they are so small and weak, as not to be able to eat any food, but after this they begin to chirp, and open their mouths; when the mother flies away, and brings them some small worms, which are their first nourishment. From this time she continues to feed them once in half an hour, or oftener, during the day, until they are able to take care of themselves. While the parents are gone after provision, the young birds lie perfectly still, and seem to sleep, not making the slightest noise until she returns. When she arrives with the food she wakes them up by a chirp, which they answer, and instantly hold up their heads, and open their mouths to receive it. The old bird takes care to feed them all in turn, never neglecting one and giving the other too much.

When the young birds are so strong as to be fitted for a short flight, the old ones, on a fair day, lead them a little distance from the nest, taking care that they

do not go so far as to be unable to return. At this time they are fed as usual, setting on the bush, or ground. But as soon as they are able to fly and catch insects for themselves, the parents forsake them entirely, and never afterwards pay them any further attention.

These birds were well known to the Israelites, —were considered clean by the Levitical law, and hence were bought and sold as an article of food.

In the New Testament, the Sparrow is several times mentioned. In the 12th chapter of Luke, it is spoken of in allusion to the care which God takes of all his works. "Are not five Sparrows sold for two farthings; and not one of them is forgotten before God. But even the hairs of your head are numbered. "Fear not, therefore, ye are of more value than many Sparrows." Verses 6, 7.

These are the words of our Saviour to his disciples. He was warning them against indulging in too much anxiety about the things of this world; and to assure them of the care and protection of their Creator, he reminds them that the smallest and meanest of his works are not forgotten, and that even the Sparrow is not beneath his notice.

If God, then, extends his protecting care toward the smallest, and most perishable of his creatures, how much more shall man, the noblest work of his hands, be the object of his peculiar blessing. "Fear not, therefore, ye are of more value than many Sparrows."

What could give a more sublime and striking idea of the power and extent of God's providence, than the thought, that he is able to watch over every part

of his creation, however small, and in our view insignificant. Thus every bird which flies, every quadruped which walks, and every fish which swims, in the whole world, are under his constant, and immediate notice. Not a single Sparrow is forgotten before God.

How careful, then, ought we to be, who are the only accountable beings on earth, lest we should offend this great and good Creator, by sinning against him, and thus bringing down on ourselves his holy indignation.

THE CANARY BIRD.

The Canary Bird came originally from the Canary Islands, as its name indicates.

It is also a native inhabitant of Italy, and Greece; but for nearly two hundred years it has been bred in other parts of Europe, and more lately in America.

For a long period, these birds were bred only in Germany, but were sent into all parts of Europe for sale. Within the last hundred years, they were so uncommon and expensive, that they were kept only by princes and people of wealth. At the present day, these birds are raised in most of our large cities, by persons who follow the business of selling birds; and are sold at moderate prices.

In its native island, where the Canary Bird is still found wild, its colour is of a dusky green. But the tame ones, like all other domestic animals, are of various colours. Most commonly they are some shade

of yellow, but some are grey, others white, and others beautifully shaded with green. But they are more esteemed for their note than their colour.

The common practice of keeping these birds in our houses, as things of amusement, has made the demand for them considerable, so that great numbers are raised and sold every year. Some account of the manner of rearing them, may therefore be interesting to the reader.

In selecting a bird, those are best, which stand upright on the perch, appear bold and lively, and are not frightened at every noise they hear, and at every thing they see. If its eyes are bright and cheerful, it is a sign of health, but if it keeps its head under the wing, it is drooping and sickly. Its song should also be particularly noticed, for there is much difference in this respect: but as it often depends on the peculiar taste of the purchaser, no directions can be given as to this qualification.

Canary birds sometimes hatch their young every month in the year, but more commonly they breed only in the spring, summer and fall months.

In Germany, they prepare a large and expensive aviary, or place in which they rear their young. This is built like a barn, only that it is longer in one direction than in the other. At each end it is divided off by a partition, making a square room. In each of these rooms they plant several trees, the partitions having large windows through them, so that the birds can pass from these rooms into the large room in the middle. The windows of these end rooms are made of wire, so as to admit the air and light, and still keep

the birds from flying away. The ground, or floor of these end rooms, they strew with chick-weed, and several kinds of seeds for them to eat. Here the birds take great delight in hopping about among the branches and leaves of the trees, and enjoying the air, and the songs of each other. In the middle room they place all sorts of materials of which these little songsters build their nests, such as fine hay, hair, and cotton. In this room, also, they construct places like pigeon holes, for them to build in, each bird having a separate apartment, in which she rears her young. From this place the light is excluded, as they are fond of a gloomy place while they are setting.

After the young are hatched, the old ones are fed with soft food, such as cabbage, lettuce, and chick-weed, and on these delicacies they feed their young. When the young birds can feed themselves, they are taken out of the nest, and placed in cages away from the parents, and are here fed on a composition made of the yolks of eggs boiled hard, and mixed with a little scalded rape-seed, and crumbs of bread. This is all beaten up together, and furnished fresh every day.

In respect to the notes of these birds, there is much difference. Some of them will have very fine notes when taken young and bred up alone. If the song is not fine, they can be educated by being placed with another which is a good singer. They catch the tones of other kindred songsters with considerable facility, and hence among the best singers there is a material difference in the song, depending on the bird with which they have been educated. In some countries

they employ the nightingale as master musician to the whole flock of Canaries, and it is this which gives some foreign birds a different tone of voice from those bred in this country.

These little birds are exceedingly timid, and some of them are so sensitive as to fall down and appear as if dead, when frightened. Dr. Darwin relates an anecdote of one which used to faint away when its cage was cleaned.

Being at a friend's house where a Canary bird was kept, he was told that it always fainted away every time its cage was cleaned. The Dr. desired to see the experiment. The cage being taken down, and the bottom drawn out, the bird began to tremble, and turned white about the root of the bill. Soon after, it opened its mouth, as if for breath, and breathed quick; it then stood up on the perch, hung down its wings, spread its tail, closed its eyes, and appeared quite stiff and motionless for nearly half an hour. It then with much trembling and panting, gradually came to itself again. Similar instances it is believed, are not uncommon.

The following anecdote is taken from Mr. Bingley's Animal Biography, and serves to show, how much so simple an animal as the Canary Bird, can be taught by time and perseverance.

In the month of May, 1820, says Mr. Bingley, a Frenchman, named Dujon, exhibited in London twenty-four Canary Birds, some of which, he said, were from eighteen to twenty-five years old. These birds performed some very extraordinary feats at the command of their master.

Some of them would balance themselves on a table, with their heads downwards, and their tails and feet in the air, standing on their shoulders. One of them took hold of a stick, with his claws, and holding on, suffered himself to be turned around, as if in the act of being roasted. Another balanced itself on a string, and swung backwards and forwards, as mountebanks do on a slack rope. A third was dressed in military uniform, having a cap on its head, wearing a sword and ammunition box by its side, and carrying a gun in one claw: after sitting, or standing upright for some time, this bird, at the word of command, threw off its military dress, without help, and then flew to its cage. A fourth suffered itself to be shot at, and falling down, as if dead, was put into a little wheelbarrow, and wheeled away by one of the other birds.

How the Frenchman contrived to make his birds perform such singular tricks is unknown. But it is certain that their education must have cost him much time, labour, and art, which might have been spent for a nobler and better purpose.

THE PIGEON.

The Pigeon tribe is quite numerous, for to this family belong the Doves as well as the several kinds of Pigeons. Some of this tribe are to be found in almost every part of the world. Their food is grain, and the seeds of plants. The female lays two eggs, and the young are commonly brother and sister. In the wild state, they generally hatch only once, or twice

a year, but the tame ones, when well fed, produce their young every month.

Both male and female assist in hatching and feeding their young. While sitting, they associate in pairs, are very fond of each other, and do not at this time associate with others. They take turns in sitting on the eggs, and when the female stays away too long, the male goes out in search of her, and drives her home.

The first food of the young Pigeon is a soft white substance which is formed in the crops of the parents, and which is thrown up and put into their mouths. During the first few days, this white substance is unmixed with any thing else; but after a few days, a little of the food of the parent bird is given with it. Gradually and from day to day, as the young birds can bear more hearty food, the old ones give them less of the white substance, and more of their own food, so that after about nine days, no more of the white substance is given.

This is a singular and wonderful provision of the Creator, and seems to be designed to answer the same purpose to the young birds, that milk does to young quadrupeds. In both cases, nature provides suitable nourishment for the young until they are able to take more solid and common food.

Why the Pigeon should require such an especial provision more than any other bird, is unknown, but this peculiarity is common to all this tribe.

THE PASSENGER PIGEON.

How large is the Passenger Pigeon?

The Passenger Pigeon is sixteen inches long, and two feet in extent, with its wings spread.

What is the shape of this bird?

In shape, this bird is uncommonly elegant. Through the breast it is plump, and full; the neck is moderately long, and the head quite small; the upper mandible is a little curved at the end; the legs are short, and feathered to the knee; and the tail is nearly as long as the body.

What is the colour of this Pigeon?

In the beautiful shades of colour, few birds exceed this. The bill is black; the eyes red; the head and upper part of the neck, fine slate blue; the breast and throat orange red; the upper part of the neck, and down the back, changeable green, purple, and gold; the under part, pale orange, fading into white; quill feathers dark, and feet and legs, red.

Where is this bird found?

The Passenger Pigeon is found in almost every part of North America. This bird is generally known under the name of Wild Pigeon, and there is hardly a person in our country who has not seen it, either in the air, at the market, or on the table.

The greatest peculiarity concerning these birds, is their habit of assembling together in such vast multitudes, as to render the accounts of them beyond all belief, were they not confirmed by the best authority.

They pass from one part of the country to another in immense flocks, and hence the name, *Passenger* Pigeon.

These short migrations are not undertaken merely for the purpose of finding a warmer, or a colder climate, like those of the common birds of passage, but for the purpose of obtaining food, for the support of their immense numbers.

The following account of their migrations, the substance of which is taken from Wilson's Ornithology, may be relied on as true, however incredible it may seem, for that gentleman either saw what he describes himself, or had his statements from the best authority.

Mr. Wilson states that he had seen immense flights of these birds in Pennsylvania, and Virginia, but that these were merely straggling parties, when compared with the congregated millions which he beheld afterwards, in Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana. The fertile regions in these states abound with beech nuts, which are the principal food of the wild Pigeon. When these nuts are consumed in one place, they discover another supply, often at the distance of seventy or eighty miles, and to this place they regularly fly every morning, and return again in the course of the day, to some place which appears to have been agreed on among themselves, and where they spend the night.

These places are always in the woods, and sometimes occupy a large extent of forest. Such places, after being occupied for many nights by the Pigeons, present a very curious and surprising appearance.—The surface of the ground is every where strewed with the large branches of trees, which have been broken down by the weight of the birds. All the tender grass, and underwood is destroyed, and the large trees themselves are as completely killed as if they had been

girdled with an axe. Sometimes, for thousands of acres in extent, this destruction is as complete, as it would have been, had it been burned over, and the marks of it remain for many years afterwards.

When an encampment of this kind is discovered, the news is spread abroad, and the people come from various distances, with guns, long poles, and other means of destruction, and attack the poor birds on all sides. These attacks are made in the night, when the birds can see nothing, and consequently cannot take any means to avoid destruction. In a short time thousands are killed, so that these hunters fill their sacks, and load their horses and waggons, and are ready by morning to go off with their booty.

Accounts of the places where these birds build their nests, and hatch their young, are still more extraordinary.

In the States above mentioned, places of this kind present the most novel and curious appearances. The nests are built on the trees of the forest, and nearly every tree is occupied with a greater, or less number, through a large extent of country.

In the State of Kentucky, some years ago, one of these nestling places extended through the woods, it was said, to the distance of forty miles, in a straight line, and was generally several miles wide. In this tract, nearly every tree contained as many nests as the branches could accommodate.

As soon as the young were fully grown, the people came from all parts of the country, with waggons, axes, beds, cooking vessels, and some of them with their whole families, and encamped around this vast nurse-

ty, where they lived on the young Pigeons, and carried away as many as they wanted.

Such was the noise made by this vast multitude, that the horses were terrified, the people were astonished, and no person could hear another speak, without bawling in his ear. The tops of every tree presented a tumult of Pigeons, crowding about their young, and fluttering with their wings, so as to produce a perpetual roar like that of thunder. Mingled with this, was the frequent crash of falling trees, for the people cut down such as contained the greatest number of nests, so as the more readily to come at the young ones.—Sometimes one tree in its fall would sweep two or three smaller ones along with it, so that the cutting down a single tree would often produce two hundred Pigeons. Only the young ones were sought for, but these were almost as large as their parents, and almost one mass of fat.

Some trees contained more than one hundred nests, and it was dangerous to walk under them, on account of the frequent fall of large branches, which were broken off by the combined weight of the nests and Pigeons.

At the time Mr. Wilson was in Kentucky, the Pigeons had consumed most of the food in that part of the country, and had found another feeding place in Indiana, sixty or eighty miles distant. From one of these places to the other, they were flying in such vast numbers, as to exceed all his belief, though he had received the most wonderful account of their flights from the inhabitants.

"They were," says Mr. Wilson, "flying with great

steadiness and rapidity, at a height, beyond my gun-shot, in several strata deep, and so close together that, could shot have reached them, one discharge could not have failed of bringing down several individuals. From right to left as far as the eye could reach, the breadth of this vast procession reached; seeming every where equally crowded. Curious to determine how long this appearance would continue, I took out my watch to note the time, and sat down to observe them."

Our author goes on to state that, for four hours these birds continued their flight in one uninterrupted stream, and that so far from diminishing in numbers, he thought they increased.

He afterwards made an estimate of the number of Pigeons which passed him during the four hours. "If we suppose this column," says he, "to have been one mile in breadth, (and I believe it to have been much more,) and that it moved at the rate of one mile in a minute; four hours, the time it continued passing, would make its whole length two hundred and forty miles. Again, supposing that each square yard of this moving body comprehended three Pigeons; the square yards in the whole space multiplied by three, would give two thousand two hundred and thirty millions, two hundred and seventy-two thousand Pigeons."

This to be sure is almost an inconceivable multitude, "but, says the author, it is propably far below the actual amount. The quantity of beach nuts, and acorns, which this number of Pigeons would consume in a day, allowing half a pint for each, would be upwards of seventeen millions of bushels."

The Creator has endowed these birds with a wonderful rapidity of flight, so that they are enabled to wander over immense tracts of country in a short time. Were this not the case, they must starve, since no small extent of country could supply them with food even for a short time.

Mr. Wilson estimates their flight to be a mile in a minute, and no man was better able to judge on such a subject than himself. A mile in a minute, would make seven hundred and twenty miles in twelve hours, or one day, a rate of travelling about ten times as great as that at which our mail coaches ordinarily run.—We see, therefore, that in the space of a few days, these birds could explore all parts of our western territory in search of food.

In the New England States, though these birds never appear in such immense numbers, still they are sometimes very numerous.

In Connecticut, and the other Atlantic States, great numbers of them are every year taken in what are called *clap nets*, and carried to market, in all the large towns. Many persons during the autumnal months, make it their business to tend these nets, and carry their produce to market. During particular seasons, these birds are caught in such abundance, that they will sell for only two or three pence each. At such times, they are shut up in coops and fattened on corn, and kept until they can be sold for a greater price.—By being fed in this manner, their flesh is much improved, and they commonly sell for a price which well repays for the trouble and expense of fattening them.

THE TURTLE DOVE.

How large a bird is the Turtle Dove?

The Turtle Dove is one foot long, and with the wings spread a foot and a half in extent.

What is the shape of this bird?

In shape, it very much resembles the passenger pigeon, but is considerably smaller.

What is the colour of the Turtle Dove?

In colour it also resembles the passenger pigeon, but all the tints are paler, and its eyes are black, instead of being red, like those of that pigeon. Besides the difference in size, its appearance is, therefore, considerably different from that of the pigeon.

Where is this bird found?

The Turtle Dove is found, more or less frequently, in all parts of the United States; but these birds never congregate in great flocks like the pigeons. Some times they are seen in small flocks, but much more commonly appear singly, or in couples.

This bird is known in the southern states under the name of Carolina pigeon, and in New England, it has the name of Mourning Dove, on account of the doleful sounds which it utters.

"This," says Mr. Wilson, "is a favorite bird with those who love to wander among the woods in the spring, and listen to their varied harmony. They will there hear many a singular, and sprightly performer, but none so mournful as this. The hopeless woe of settled sorrow, swelling the heart of female innocence itself, could not assume tones more sad, or more tender and affecting." "Its notes are four; the first is somewhat the highest, and preparatory, seeming to be

uttered with an inspiration of the breath, as if the afflicted creature were just recovering its voice from the last convulsive sobs of distress; this is followed by three long, deep, and mournful moanings, that no person of sensibility can listen to without sympathy. A pause of a few moments ensues; and again the voice of sorrow is renewed as before."

But these doleful tones are not the notes of distress, but of affection. They are the language of love and contentment, which these faithful birds utter towards each other.

Turtle Doves, to a certain extent, are birds of passage. They leave the northern and middle states on the approach of winter, and retire to the warmer climate of the southern states, where they spend the cold season, and return to the north again in the spring.

These birds make a peculiar whistling noise with their wings when they fly, and particularly when they rise and light, and by this they may always be known from the pigeons. They sit on trees, fences, or on the ground, as is most convenient, or as they are invited by the prospect of food. They build their nests on trees, generally preferring an evergreen, for that purpose. It is composed of a handful of twigs laid together with little art and lined on the inside with dried roots and leaves. The eggs are two in number, and almost as white as snow. The two birds, like the pigeons, unite in feeding and taking care of the young.

The flesh of this Dove is much superior to that of the pigeon; but its gentleness, its innocence, and beauty, together with the tenderness of its notes, are its protection, except with those whose appetites are

stronger than their feelings of humanity, or compassion. Such persons shoot these innocent birds whenever they can find them. The attachment, and fidelity of Turtle Doves to each other, has been known and taken notice of in all ages, and not unfrequently celebrated in poetry. Nor is the idea of an uncommon affection between them imaginary, for if a pair be placed in a cage and suffered to remain together for a while, and then one be taken away, the other will soon pine away and die of grief.

A pair of Turtle Doves had been long together in a cage, when, during the absence of one of them, the other was killed by an unruly dog. When the other came home, and found that his partner was gone, he searched for her in all the places where she might be expected to be found, but not finding her, he came back to the cage, and there perched himself on the feeding place, where they usually sat together. Here he waited her return, constantly moaning her absence for two days. But being disappointed in his hopes of seeing her, he after that time refused to take any more food, and perpetually moaning his loss, gradually pined away and died on the spot.

The Dove is several times mentioned in the scriptures, and by the Levitical law was not only allowed to be eaten as a clean bird, but was also, sometimes, enjoined to be used in sacrifice. "A Turtle Dove and two young pigeons," were a part of the offering which the Lord directed Abraham to make, as preparatory to the revelation he made him concerning the destiny of his posterity. In certain cases of sacrifice, directed by the Levitical law, where the poverty of the person

was such as not to allow the use of a more costly animal, Doves or pigeons were enjoined. The words are, "And if she be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two Turtle Doves, or two young pigeons; the one for a burnt offering, and the other for a sin offering." Leviticus, chapter 12, verse 8.

We may learn from this, that it is not the value or largeness of the offering that makes it acceptable to the Lord, but the motive with which it is made.

If presented with a humble and willing mind, the Turtle Doves, or pigeons, were just as acceptable in the eye of Heaven, as the lamb. The two mites of the poor widow were estimated above all the splendid offerings which the rich, in their pride, were induced to give.

Let us, therefore, when we do acts of charity, take care that our hearts are in the work, and then we may be sure that the smallest gifts will be acceptable offerings before the Lord; but if we give ever so much merely to be seen of men, our offerings, like that of Cain, will be refused, and we shall be guilty of hypocrisy in this sight.

In the Book of Genesis, the Dove is mentioned as the bird, by means of which Noah ascertained that the waters of the flood had abated, and that the dry land had appeared. The raven which was first sent forth for this purpose, did not return, probably because that bird, which feeds on flesh, found abundance of food in the dead animals which the waters had destroyed.—But the clean and delicate Dove, whose food is only the seeds of plants, could find nothing to eat, nor any place on which to rest herself, and was therefore obli-

ged to return to the ark. The account, as contained in Genesis, is too interesting to be omitted here. After the raven had returned, Noah "Also sent forth a Dove from him to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground; But the Dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark, and the waters were on the face of the whole earth; then he put forth his hand, and took her and pulled her in, unto him, into the ark. And he stayed yet other seven days; and again he sent forth the Dove out of the ark, and the Dove came in to him in the evening, and lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf plucked off; so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth." Chapter 8, verses 8–11.

Among the whole feathered creation, there is not, perhaps, a bird better fitted to perform such an errand than the Dove. Her wings are so long and powerful, that she remains on them for many hours without tiring, and to whatever distance she may go, she always returns home again at night.

The olive leaf which she brought home, it appears was not picked up on the water, but was plucked off from a living tree. This then, was certain proof that the waters had not only abated, but that within the circuit which the Dove had taken, the ground was left naked, otherwise she could not have come to the olive tree.

How cheering to Noah and his family must have been this sure indication, that the waters of the flood were retiring, and that after their long confinement, they should soon again behold the light of the sun, and stand on the face of the earth. Hence it is, that by

all civilized nations, the olive branch has ever been considered a token of peace and a harbinger of mercy.

The Dove itself, has, from the first ages, been celebrated for its beauty, innocence, and softness of manners; and hence women of uncommon beauty have been named after this bird. One of the daughters of Job is an instance. "And in all the land, were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job." His eldest daughter therefore, was called Jemima, which in the Arabic language signifies Dove.

The swiftness and innocence of this bird is beautifully alluded to in the 55th Psalm. "Oh, that I had wings like a Dove! for then I would fly away and be at rest; I would hasten my escape from the windy storms and tempests."

Good people are always in pain, when they are obliged to be in company with the wicked. They desire to escape from the windy storm and tempest, the boisterous riotings of evil men. Hence it is, that pious and godly men, are never seen in the company of the wicked and ungodly, unless it is for the purpose of setting them a good example, and trying to make them better.

The Dove is mentioned in several other places in the holy scriptures, but we can here allude to only one more.

This bird, as is well known, has always been admired for its innocence, and amiable disposition. Our Saviour, in allusion to this part of its character, makes it an example for imitation to his disciples. "Be ye as wise as serpents, and as harmless as Doves," was an important part of the directions which he enjoined

on them to observe, when they should go out into the world to preach the gospel.

Every character would be imperfect, without wisdom and innocence; but with these two qualities combined, a character would be formed, than which nothing in human nature could be more perfect.

Wisdom without innocence, would qualify its possessor to do much evil in the world, by imposing upon others; and by carrying into effect ambitious plans, to the great injury of mankind. Innocence, without wisdom, would constantly expose its possessor to be cheated, and deceived by the arts of designing men.

But he who has a sound judgement, and an enlightened understanding, combined with integrity and benevolence, is prepared to prosecute the most important ends by the most judicious means. Such a man, would be both enabled, and inclined, to prove all things, and to hold fast only to that which is good.

THE PARROT.

This tribe of birds are natives of warm countries. They associate in flocks at certain seasons, but live chiefly in pairs, and are excessively noisy and clamorous. They lay their eggs in hollow trees, and the two birds take turns in sitting on the eggs. The legs are short, and the toes are four in number, of which two are set forward and two backward. The bill is short and hooked, and the upper, as well as the lower mandible moves. The head is large, and the crown flat. They live on fruits and seeds, which they carry to the

mouth with one of the claws. They assist themselves in climbing with their bills. Some of them can be taught to speak words.

Parrots seem to hold the same place among birds, that monkeys do among quadrupeds. Both are numerous, imitative, and mischievous.

The largest birds of this kind are called Macaws; the next size are called Parrots, and the smallest, Paroquets.

THE GREEN MACAW.

How large is the Green Macaw?

The Green Macaw is a foot and a half long, from the head to the end of the tail. The tail is somewhat longer than the body.

What is the colour of this bird?

The general colour of this bird is green, as its name indicates; its bill is black; around the eyes it is white, marked with black lines; the forehead is chesnut purple, and the crown blue: on the thighs the feathers are red; and the wings are in different parts crimson, blue, and black.

Where is the Green Macaw found?

The Green Macaw is found in Brazil and other parts of South America. These birds, if properly treated, will bear the cold of northern climates, but they never multiply out of their own country. They are easily domesticated, and soon become familiar with the family in which they are kept. Towards strangers, however, they are exceedingly snappish, and ill-natured.

The Green Macaw is very fond of the notice and

attention of its mistress, and is highly offended, if she pays any attention to a child in its presence. If she takes the child on her lap and caresses it, the bird becomes outrageous, and will dart upon, and bite it, if not prevented.

From the same jealous disposition, this bird cannot bear the presence of other Parrots; but if one be brought into the room, becomes angry, and enjoys no peace until it is removed.

This kind of Parrot is exceedingly noisy and mischievous. It will tear things in pieces, bite strangers, and squall in a most unpleasant manner. It is sometimes taught to speak words, but never talks with the same facility that some of the smaller kinds do. It is chiefly admired, therefore, for its size and beauty.

THE GUINEA PARROT.

This bird is called the little red-headed Parrot, and by some the Guinea Sparrow. It is among the most beautiful of the Parrot kind, and in size not much larger than the lark.

This Parrot is found in Guinea, Ethiopia, and the East Indies, where great flocks of them are often seen.

Its general colour is green; the bill, chin, and forehead are red, and the lower part of the back is blue.

These birds are exceedingly kind and affectionate towards each other, and it has been observed that the female generally perches on the left side of the male, and that she seldom attempts to eat before he sets the example.

Mr. Bingley relates that a couple of these birds were

kept together in a large cage, on the bottom of which their food and drink were placed in the usual manner. The cage had several perches in it, but the birds commonly sat on the same perch, and close beside each other. When one went down for food, the other went also, and when both had satisfied their appetites, they returned together to the highest perch.

In this manner they passed four years in their confinement, and from their attentions to each other, and their apparent contentment, it was evident that a strong attachment existed between them.

At the end of this time, the female fell into a state of weakness, which had every symptom of old age; her legs swelled, and knots appeared on them, as if the disease had been of the gout kind. It was no longer in her power to go down to the bottom of the cage and take her food, as she had always done before, and the male seeing this, kindly carried it up to her, taking it in his bill, and putting it into her mouth, as she sat on the perch.

In this way he continued to feed her with the greatest care and attention for four months, she never attempting to come down from her place. Her infirmities, however, increased every day, until she was no longer able to sit there, but fell down to the bottom of the cage. She now, from time to time, made feeble efforts to get on the lower perch, and in these attempts, the male tried every way in his power to assist her. Sometimes he took hold of the upper part of her wing, and used all his power to draw her up to him on the perch, and this not succeeding, he laid hold of her bill, and tried to pull her up in that way, repeating his ef-

forts for that purpose several times. His countenance, his actions, and his continued anxiety, showed in this affectionate bird a strong desire to assist the weakness of his companion, and to soften her sufferings.

But the scene became still more interesting, and touching, when the female was at the point of death. Her unfortunate partner went round, and round her, without stopping; he increased his attentions, and his tender cares as her weakness increased; he tried to open her bill to give her food, when she no longer had power to open it herself; his grief seemed to increase every moment; he would go to her, and return again, without doing any thing, because he knew not what to do: now and then he uttered the most pitiful cries, and at other times he stood with his eyes fixed on her in sorrowful silence.

At last the poor bird breathed its last breath; and from that time he became feeble, and moaning his solitary state, he languished a few months, and then died also.

Here we see an example of affection in a pair of little birds, well worthy of our imitation. In this world of sickness and trouble, there is not a duty we owe our fellow creatures more obvious, than that of assisting those who cannot help themselves. Nor is it to our particular friends only, that we owe this duty; for Christ says, "if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?" This shows that we are not to expect any reward for loving and helping our friends, and those who love us; on the contrary, it is wicked and unfeeling not to do so. Even the birds of the air, as we see by the above

story, possess natural affection, and repay kindness with kindness. As reasonable beings, and above all, as Christians, we are bound to do more. We must extend the hand of charity and benevolence to strangers, when in affliction, and like the Good Samaritan, pour oil and wine into the wounds of the distressed, wherever we meet them.

THE ASH COLOURED PARROT.

How large is the ash coloured Parrot?

The ash coloured Parrot measures nearly a foot and a half long; but the tail is considerably longer than the body.

What is the colour of this bird?

Its plumage is chiefly of the colour of wood ashes; the bill is black; the head and neck are grey; the tail is bright red; the legs are ash coloured, and claws blackish.

Where is this bird found?

This bird is a native of Guinea, and other parts of Africa.

This is the kind of Parrot that is most highly valued, on account of the facility with which it imitates the human voice. It listens with great attention to its instructor, and will try to repeat its lesson when alone. Its memory, if cultivated when young, is sometimes very surprising. An author of credit tells us of a Parrot, which could repeat the whole of the Apostles' creed, without making any mistakes.

Some of these birds of uncommon talents in the art of talking and singing, have been sold for considerable sums of money. Colonel O'Kelly, an English gentle-

man, gave for a Parrot five hundred dollars. This bird could repeat a great number of sentences, answer many questions, and sing or whistle a variety of songs. While singing or whistling, it beat time with all the accuracy of an experienced musician. If any mistake was made in the performance, it would go back to the place of the error, correct it, and then sing the tune through with wonderful exactness. This singular bird could express her wants in such a manner as to be well understood by the family.

Her exact age was not known, but it was certain that she was upwards of thirty years old when she died.

Colonel O'Kelly was repeatedly offered five hundred guineas a year for the use of this bird, by those who wished to carry her about for public exhibition; but out of tenderness to his favourite, he constantly refused to let her go at any price.

This bird was so celebrated in London, that when she died, an account of her death, with a sketch of her life, was given in the London Evening Post.

Dr. Goldsmith says, that a Parrot, which belonged to king Henry the Seventh, having been kept in a room next the river Thames, had learned to repeat many words and sentences from the boatmen and passengers on the river. One day while it was sporting on the perch, which happened to be over the river, it unluckily fell into the water. The bird no sooner found itself in this situation, than it called aloud, "A boat! twenty pounds for a boat!" A boatman, happening to be near the place where the Parrot was floating, immediately took it up, and carried it to the

king, at the same time demanding of him the twenty pounds which the bird had bid for the boat. This the king refused, but agreed to leave it to the Parrot to say how much the man should have. The bird, understanding this conversation, instantly screamed out, "Give the knave a groat!"

Mr. Locke has related an anecdote of one of these birds, still more extraordinary, and were it not the case, that the evidence was sufficient to satisfy him of its truth, we should not relate it here.

There was a certain old Parrot at Brazil, which was so celebrated for giving answers like a rational creature, that Prince Maurice had the curiosity to send for it, and see for himself, whether the extraordinary stories he had heard about it were true.

When first brought into the room, the bird exclaimed, "What a company of white men are here." One of the company then asked it, "who is that man," (pointing towards the prince.) The Parrot answered, "some great general or other." The prince then asked it, "from what place do you come." The bird replied, "from Maringan." "To whom do you belong? said the prince. "To a Portuguese," said Poll. He asked again, "what do you do there?" "I look after chickens." The prince, laughing, exclaimed, "*You* look after chickens!" The Parrot answered, "Yes, I,—and I know well enough how to do it;" at the same time beginning to chuck, like a hen.

This story is related by Mr. Locke, in his Essay on Human Understanding.

THE CROW.

The Crow tribe feed both on flesh and vegetables. They associate in flocks, and are sometimes very noisy and clamorous. They inhabit almost every country in the world, and generally build their nests on trees. Some of them do much mischief by pulling up and eating the corn after it is planted. This tribe have claws, for seizing their prey, which they sometimes take alive; but their bills are not hooked, for tearing, like those of the falcon. One or two of this family can be taught to sing, and to speak words. The Raven, common Crow, and Rook, belong to this family.

THE RAVEN.

How large is the Raven?

The Raven is two feet long, from the bill to the end of the tail, and nearly four feet in extent, with the wings spread.

What is the colour of this bird?

The general colour of the Raven is deep, glossy black, with steel blue reflections.

What is the difference between the Raven and the Crow?

This bird differs from the Crow in being larger, and in having its bill more hooked at the end. It also differs in colour, the Crow being of a bluish black, and without that gloss which is seen on the Raven.

This bird is hardy, bold, voracious, sly, and very mischievous. When tamed, which is easily done, it becomes familiar, and gentle, and by the variety of tricks which it plays, is often very amusing. It may be taught to bring and carry things, like a dog, to talk,

like a parrot, and even to sing with a tolerable voice. But the cunning and vicious tricks which the Raven is always in the habit of playing, often renders him a very disagreeable animal. He is so voracious, as to eat any thing that comes in his way, either raw or cooked. He is also a thief by habit, and even when he has enough, will continue to steal, and hide his plunder. He is curious to know what is contained in every nook and corner of the house: and particularly if any thing is covered up, and carefully concealed, he will continue to poke and pry, until, if possible, he comes at the secret. He torments the dogs and cats, by bawling, and striking at them; plays his tricks upon the hens and chickens; drives away every rook, crow, or Raven, that comes near his habitation; and picks out the eyes of every sick sheep or lamb in the barn yard.

He is so in the habit of stealing, as to take things of which he can make no sort of use. Any article that has a shining surface, is always a strong temptation to him. A tea-spoon, a piece of money, a ring, or a knife, are things on which he sets a particular value; and he never fails, when they come in his way, to carry them to his favourite hiding place.

A cook in a family missed many tea-spoons, one after another, but could not account for the loss. He also missed several other articles, in a manner quite mysterious, and unaccountable. The poor honest cook might have been accused of taking these things himself, had he not one day caught a Raven that was kept in the house in the act of stealing a tea-spoon. He watched the bird, and saw him carry it away to

his hiding-place, and there conceal it. The cook now laid open the mystery, for on searching this place, he not only drew out this spoon, but a dozen more along with it.

In the wild state, the Raven is a most greedy and ferocious bird. He destroys and devours any helpless animal that falls within his power. About his food, he has not the least delicacy. No kind of flesh, whether living, or long dead, comes amiss to him. Any thing which is lame or sick, and which he can master, or which once had life, excites his craving appetite, and he falls eagerly to work to satisfy it. Having eaten all he can himself, he then goes and gives notice to his fellow Ravens of his good fortune, and invites them to go and partake of what he has left.

The Raven is not, like the eagle and falcon, a bold and courageous warrior, who attacks animals in the vigour of life, and thus gives them a chance of escaping if they can; but he is a base and cowardly assassin, who attacks the young or the disabled, when they can make no resistance. In his disposition, he is artful, mean, and cruel, and in his habits unclean and voracious.

Such is the character of the Raven. In it we find nothing generous, or noble, or any thing that is worthy of imitation; but on the contrary, every part of his conduct is hateful and worthy only to be despised. Even his colour is made to correspond with the darkness of his character.

The Raven has always been considered a bird of ill omen. Its croakings were supposed to be a sign, that some evil was about to happen to one or more of

the persons who heard them. Even at the present day, some ignorant people believe that if a Raven lights upon their houses, some dreadful accident will happen to one or more of the family. This belief, however, arises from folly, and the want of knowledge; for nothing can be more ridiculous, than to suppose that this bird is sent by a superior power, to warn us of evil; and it would be still more foolish to believe that the bird came of its own accord for this purpose.

The Raven is several times spoken of in the Scriptures, and generally in allusion to some of its peculiar habits; once or twice it is mentioned in connexion with interesting historical events.

This bird often builds its nest on the top of some ancient tower, or in some part of a ruined or forsaken building;—a place once inhabited, but which has become desolate, by the death, or removal of the people. In allusion to this circumstance, several of the prophets, when they have spoken of the approaching ruin of a people, or nation, have figuratively expressed it, by saying, that where cities once stood, and where the voice of mirth and melody was once heard, there should come such desolation, that the Raven should inhabit that place. Thus Isaiah says of Edom: "The cormorant and the bittern shall possess it, the owl, also, and the Raven, shall dwell in it." Chapter 34, verse 11.

When we consider that the Raven and the owl live only in places which are distant from the habitations of men, and that in their wild state, they shun all human society, we cannot but be struck with the awful desolation that attended the fulfilment of this prophecy.

And yet it is thus that God sometimes punishes the wickedness of nations.

The young Ravens, in another place are spoken of, as being under the particular care of providence. The Most High said to Job, "who provideth for the Raven his food? when his young ones cry unto God, they wander for lack of meat." Job, chapter 38, verse 41. Again, it is said, "He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young Ravens when they cry."

These passages, while they show the care which God takes of all his creatures, are striking illustrations of the natural history of this bird. The old Ravens, as soon as the young ones are of a certain age, and sometimes even before they are able to take care of themselves, either forsake them, or drive them away from the nest. And hence they are often heard to cry, and are seen to wander, "for lack of meat."

It is at this this time that the native instinct of these young creatures is first called into action, in order to seek out their food, and thus it is, that the God of Nature and of Heaven, feeds them, by endowing them with sagacity to provide for their own wants.

This is a striking example of the fatherly care which the Almighty exercises over all his works; and from it we may conclude that since He "feeds the young Ravens when they cry," there is a certainty that the children of men will never suffer want, so long as they put their trust in Him.

Solomon alludes to this bird in his awful warning to children against disobedience to their parents. "The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey the voice of his mother, the Ravens of the valley shall

pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it." Proverbs, chapter 30, verse 17.

Solomon here refers to the valley of Tophet, in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, which was called the valley of dead bodies, because the remains of executed criminals were thrown there. This place was the resort of rapacious birds, for, as the bodies of these criminals were left unburied, they here found full gratification for their voracious appetites.

The most disgraceful and ignominious treatment that could be inflicted on the worst of men, was to cast their bodies into this valley. And hence, it was not every criminal who suffered death, but only the most guilty, that underwent this punishment.

How horrid, and unnatural, then, must the crime of disobedience to parents have appeared in the eyes of Solomon, when he says, that such children deserve the punishment which is reserved only for the most guilty malefactor.

Let children, then, take care how they treat their parents with scorn, or contempt, but let them render due obedience to their commands; always remembering, that by so doing, they obey, not only the law of God, but of nature; and that, by refusing to do so, they run the risk of becoming miserable outcasts, both in this world, and that which is to come.

Another interesting fact concerning the Raven, is, that these birds fed the holy prophet Elijah, at the command of God, in the time of famine. The Lord said to Elijah, "Get thee hence, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And it shall be, that thou shalt drink the brook; and I have com-

manded the Ravens to feed thee there." First Kings, Chapter 17, verse 3–6. "So he did according to the word of the Lord." "And the Ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening, and he drank of the brook."

If the inquiry be made, where the Ravens obtained the bread and meat for the supply of the prophet, we have no certain answer to give on that subject, as the Scriptures do not inform us.

THE ROOK.

The Rook is about the size of the common Crow, being a foot and a half long, and nearly three feet in extent.

The Rook and the crow appear so much alike, that one is often mistaken for the other. But the Rook differs from the crow in having no feathers between the root of the bill and the eye, and in having a more glossy and beautiful plumage. These birds, also, differ widely in their habits, the crow living on putrid flesh, while the Rook feeds only on insects and corn.

Rooks are very sociable in their habits, and in their manners harmless and innocent. They assemble in large flocks, and are so fond of the society of each other, as to build their nests together on the same tree. It sometimes, however, happens in this community, as well as in others, that individuals quarrel, and are occasionally seen pulling the nests of each other in pieces, and fighting for the mastery. Such conduct would seem unfavourable to their living together in harmony, and yet, if a pair take offence at such a quarrel, and retire to a separate tree, and there build their nest, the

others will follow, and pull it in pieces. Some unhappy pairs are not permitted to build their nests at any place, until all the rest have finished theirs, for as soon as they have placed a few sticks together as a foundation, a party will come, and throw them on the ground. This, probably, is owing to some offence they have given to the community.

As soon as the Rooks have finished their nests, and before they lay their eggs, the males begin to bring food and feed the females; and they continue to supply them in this manner during the whole time they are sitting, and until the young are of considerable size, thus leaving the mothers entire leisure to take care of their young in the best manner.

When a community of these birds is once formed, they seldom admit strangers among them. If newcomers from other societies appear in the neighbourhood, the old inhabitants are so uncivil as to give them a severe beating, and drive them away.

A curious instance of this kind happened at Newcastle, in England. Near that town there was a large rookery, which had been established for many years; and it seems that this community had, as usual, adopted the rule, that their numbers should not be increased by the admission of strangers among them. One year, however, in defiance of this rule, a pair of strange Rooks came and attempted to join this society by building their nest among the others. But they were constantly beaten by the old inhabitants; their nest was pulled down, and they were finally compelled to quit the place. These poor birds then took refuge on the spire of the Exchange, in the midst of the town,

and although perpetually insulted and interrupted by the other Rooks, they continued to work, until they finished a nest on the top of the vane. Here they reared their young, and although the nest and its inhabitants were turned about by every change of wind, still they become so attached to the place as to return and occupy the same nest for ten successive years. The spire was then pulled down, and these faithful birds were compelled to seek another place.

This circumstance was so curious, and the inhabitants of Newcastle felt such an interest in these birds, that an engraver there, executed a small representation of the top of the spire, the vane, and the nest, and such was the demand for this little curiosity, that the artist made a considerable sum of money for his pains.

The substance of the following account of a community of Rooks, is related by Dr. Percival.

A large colony of Rooks lived many years in a grove on the bank of a river near Manchester, in England. On a pleasant morning, it was curious and interesting to watch the various labours and amusements of this crowded society. The idle members amused themselves by chasing each other in every direction ; and in their flight, they made the air resound with their discordant croakings.

In the midst of these playful tricks, it unfortunately happened that one Rook, by a sudden turn, struck his bill against the wing of another, and the blow was such as to throw the wounded bird into the river. On seeing this, the sport ceased in an instant, and a general cry of distress was heard throughout the community. All the birds hovered, with every expression

of anxiety, over their suffering companion. Encouraged by these marks of their kindness, and perhaps advised by a language known only to each other, the wounded bird sprang into the air, and with one strong effort reached the point of a rock at the edge of the water. On this, the expressions of joy were loud and animated from the whole company. But this cry was soon changed into notes of lamentation, for the poor bird, in attempting to fly towards the nest, fell into the river again, and there was drowned, amidst the moanings of the assembled community.

The Rooks, probably by sad experience, know very well how to distinguish when they are in danger, from the approach of a man, and when he can do them no injury. Hence a person may go very near a rookery empty handed; but if he carries a gun, the whole community instantly take the alarm, and with loud screams warn each other of the danger; the whole flock, at the same time, taking wing before he comes near them.

THE SHRIKE.

The Shrikes are a tribe of birds which live both on animal and vegetable food. They have hooked bills, much resembling those of the hawk, and claws with which they are enabled to seize and hold small birds, and other little animals. Considering their small size they are a courageous and daring tribe, and most of them have an air of smartness and activity in their

manners, which indicate their readiness to engage in hazardous undertakings. The species of this tribe are quite numerous, and one or more of them are found in almost every country; but the description of a single specimen will give an idea of the manners of the whole family.

THE GREAT SHRIKE.

[*This is also called the Butcher Bird.*]

How large is the Great Shrike?

The Great Shrike is ten inches long and thirteen inches in extent.

What is the colour of this bird?

The colour of the bill is black; the upper parts are pale ash-colour; the throat and under parts are dirty white; the quill-feathers and tail are black, ending in white; below the eyes there is a patch of black, and the legs are of the same colour.

Where is this bird found?

The Great Shrike is found in most parts of the United States, and in Europe.

The manners and habits of this bird are in some respects quite peculiar. Whenever he takes more food than he immediately wants, he carries it to a thorn-bush, or the sharp twig of some other tree, and there hangs it up, by sticking the thorn through it. In orchards frequented by these birds, it is said that on almost every tree, there may be seen grasshoppers, or other insects, suspended in this manner. It is from his hanging up his provisions in this way, as butchers do their meat, that he is called *Butcher Bird.*

This practice has been thought to arise from a desire to call other birds near him, that he might seize

them, while they were attempting to take the bait thus fixed in their sight. But the same habit is common to this bird when tamed, and seems to arise rather from the shortness of his claws, and consequent difficulty he has of holding his food, while he tears it with his bill. Thus if he kills a small bird, when in the wild state, he takes it to a thorn, on which he hangs it, and then with his hooked bill, pulls off the flesh, one piece after another, until the whole is eaten. When tamed, he acts in a similar manner with any piece of flesh that is given him, spitting it on a sharpened stick or nail, which is fixed up in his cage for that purpose.

This habit does not seem to arise entirely from a wish to preserve his food for future use, for in many, and perhaps, in most cases, the grasshoppers, which are served in this manner, are suffered to dry and become useless in the sun, the bird never touching them afterwards.

In like manner the raven and crow hide their provisions, and other articles which they cannot eat in some sly place, but never see them afterwards.

THE BLUE JAY.

How large a bird is the Blue Jay?

The Blue Jay is one foot long, and a foot and a half in extent.

What colour is this bird?

Its colour is chiefly blue, which is deep on the back, and tail, but grows pale along the sides; the throat,

breast, and under parts are white; the bill, and a ring about the neck are black, and the tail, and some of the wing feathers are barred with the same colour. On the head there is a high crest of purplish blue feathers, which the bird can raise, or depress at pleasure.

Where is this bird found?

The Blue Jay is found in most parts of North America, from Canada to Florida.

What is the food of this bird?

This bird lives chiefly on chesnuts, acorns, and insects, but sometimes eats such flesh as he can find, and in times of scarcity, kills small birds for his own use. He is also very fond of the eggs of other birds, which he steals when he can find them.

The Blue Jay is among the most beautiful, as well as active and noisy birds of our forests. He is almost every where to be found, and go when you will among the woods, particularly in the fall of the year, you may be sure, that he will force himself on your acquaintance. To the sportsman this bird is often the most troublesome creature imaginable, screaming out and alarming his game, just at the moment when he is ready to fire upon it. Many a sportsman has been placed in a most awkward and provoking condition by such interference. Perhaps he has been half a mile around, and waded up to his knees through the mud, to get within gun-shot of a flock of ducks; and just at the moment when he thinks to accomplish his object, he happens to see a Blue Jay sitting still and quiet over his head. He then knows that his labour is lost, for the bird on seeing him instantly squalls out, and away goes his game.

The gunner now fires at the Jay in revenge for such a provocation, but generally without effect, for the cunning bird takes care not to give the alarm until he is well on the wing.

This bird is seldom silent, unless he has some secret, or some mischievous object in view. While the female is sitting on her nest, the male visits her only in the most secret manner. He never, on these occasions, makes the least noise, while near her, probably because he is afraid the nest will be robbed, in the same manner that he has many a time robbed those of other birds. When he pays a plundering visit to the barn yard or corn field, he is also silent and secret, until he happens to be discovered, when he screams out in triumph, and instantly makes his escape.

Mr. Wilson says that this bird is not only bold and vociferous, but possesses a considerable talent at mimicry, and seems to enjoy great satisfaction in mocking and teasing the little hawk, imitating his cry whenever he sees him, and squealing out as if caught. This soon brings a number of his own kind about him, who all join in the frolic, darting at the hawk, and imitating the cries of a bird sorely wounded, and already in the clutches of the devourer. But this ludicrous farce often ends in the destruction of one of the actors; for the hawk, after bearing these insults for a time, singles out one of the most noisy and provoking, and at one swoop brings him to the ground. The cry of distress, instead of being a mockery, now becomes real, all the Jays at the same time changing their tone into loud screams, to give notice of the disaster. The hawk, mean time, being sure of his prey, eats it at his leisure.

THE CUCKOO.

This tribe of birds have long bills, which are a little crooked; their toes are placed, two backwards, and two forward; the tail consists of ten feathers, the outer ones being only about half as long as those in the middle. They feed chiefly on insects.

THE COMMON CUCKOO.

How large is the Common Cuckoo?

The Common Cuckoo is fourteen inches long, and two feet in extent.

What is the colour of this bird?

Its colour along the back is light brown; the breast and under parts, are white; and the throat is pale grey. The plumage of the young is brown, mixed with black.

Where is this bird found?

The Common Cuckoo is found in England, and other parts of Europe; but not in America.

What is said concerning this bird's nest?

It is said that this Cuckoo does not build for herself a nest, but that she lays her eggs in the nests of other birds.

We are indebted to the celebrated Dr. Jenner, for the substance of the following account of this singular bird.

He states, that during the time when the hedge sparrow is laying her eggs, the Cuckoo goes and deposites hers among the others, in the nest. This sparrow, for some reason which is unknown, has a habit, while she is sitting, of throwing some of her eggs out of the nest, and of injuring others in such a manner that only two

or three of them produce young birds. But it is very remarkable, that she has never been known to throw out, or injure the eggs of the Cuckoo.

When the sparrow has sat her usual time, and has hatched the young Cuckoos, and some of her own offspring, it has been found that the young sparrows, together with any unhatched eggs that may remain, are thrown out of the nest, thus leaving only the young Cuckoos to be nurtured by the old sparrow. The young sparrows are not killed, nor are the eggs broken, but both are left to perish, entangled in the bushes, or lying on the ground under them.

From observations, afterwards made by Dr. Jenner, he found that the old sparrow was not herself the means of turning out her eggs, and her young, but that this was done by the young Cuckoo. He states that he looked into a sparrow's nest which contained two sparrow's eggs, and one Cuckoo's egg. Afterwards, on going to the nest, he found that it contained only one young sparrow and the young Cuckoo. He now watched the proceedings, and saw the young Cuckoo in the act of throwing out the little sparrow. The manner of doing this was quite curious, and displayed in a wonderful degree the instinct of an animal only a day or two old.

The young Cuckoo contrived, after working for some time, to get the sparrow on its back; then holding up its wings to prevent its rolling off over the head, it climbed backwards, up the side of the nest until it reached the edge; where resting for a moment, it threw the poor little outcast quite from the nest, and it fell on the ground. After staying tor a moment, and

feeling about with its wings, to be certain that the work was properly done, the young tyrant lay quietly down in possession of the whole nest.

Dr. Jenner afterwards made several experiments by putting an egg at a time, into the nest with this young Cuckoo, and always found, that like the little sparrow, they were soon thrown on the ground.

It might seem improbable from the round shape of a young bird's back, that an egg could be made to lie there, while the little animal crawled up the side of the nest and cast it out. But our author says that nature seems to have formed this bird with reference to such an object, for the back is shaped differently from that of other young birds, being wide just back of the wings, and having a hollow place there in which the egg can be safely lodged.

To us, the reason why the Cuckoo, in common with other birds, does not build a nest and hatch her young, is unknown. Perhaps it may be owing to the short time which she stays in England, where Dr. Jenner made his observations. In that country, this bird migrates, like many others, with the seasons, but she comes late and goes away early, staying only a short time. The American Cuckoo is also a migratory bird, but her stay is longer, aad she lays and hatches her young like other birds.

In the United States there are two species of the Cuckoo, both of which differ from the Common, or English one already described. These are the Yellow-billed and the Black-billed Cuckoo. Both these are a little smaller than the Common one of Europe. The yellow billed is of a yellowish brown colour on

the back, and white underneath; the lower mandible being yellow. The black billed Cuckoo does not differ materially in colour or size from this; but both mandibles are black. Both these birds are common in this country.

THE WOODPECKER.

The Woodpeckers are a tribe of birds which differ in their manners and habits from all others. They live chiefly on worms and other insects, which they obtain by pecking holes in decayed trees. Their tongues are long, sharp, bony at the end, and barbed; forming an instrument, by means of which they draw the worms out of the crevices of the wood. They lay their eggs in hollow trees, or in holes which they make for themselves. Their toes are placed, two backwards, and two forward; and their tails consist of ten sharp pointed feathers.

IVORY-BILLED WOODPECKER.

How large is the Ivory-billed Woodpecker?

The Ivory-billed Woodpecker is twenty inches long and two feet and a half in extent.

What is the shape of this bird?

The form and appearance of this bird, are very striking and beautiful. His neck is elegantly curved; his head is crowned with a noble crest, more than two inches high; his bill is smooth and white, like polished

ivory; his eye is brilliant and daring, and his whole aspect, noble and dignified.

What is the colour of this Woodpecker?

His colour is black, with a white stripe beginning near the eye and running down the neck and along the back; the upper quill feathers are also white; the forward part of the crest is black, and the back part, of a most splendid crimson.

Where does this bird live?

The Ivory-billed Woodpecker inhabits all the southern parts of North America, from Virginia to Florida. He resides in the great forests, and is seen only on the tallest and largest trees.

This noble bird stands at the head of the tribe to which he belongs. By his size, his superb crest, and his ivory bill, nature seems to have designed him as the king of his race. In his manners and character, he is by far superior to the common kind of Woodpeckers, and as if conscious of his rank and dignity, he never associates with those who seek their food among shrubbery, and along fallen trees. He seems to scorn such lowly situations, and is to be found only among the towering trees of the forest. There the strokes of his bill, like those of the wood cutter, may be heard for miles, resounding through the solitary wilds of nature.

At such places, may be seen enormous pine or cypress trees, dead and dry at the top, with cart loads of bark and chips at the root, the fruits of his industry.—He never attacks sound or growing trees, because they yield him no food for his labour, as it is only decayed ones in which worms and insects are found.

Hence, although endowed with strength and power

to do much mischief, by destroying the forest timber, he never does the least injury.

The character of this curious bird will be best illustrated by Mr. Wilson's account of the conduct of one which he wounded and took alive.

"The first place I observed this bird at," says he, "when on my journey to the south, was about twelve miles from Wilmington in North Carolina. There I found the bird from which the drawing of the figure in the plate was taken. This bird was only wounded slightly in the wing, and on being caught, uttered a loudly reiterated, and most piteous note, exactly resembling the violent crying of a young child; which so terrified my horse, as nearly to have cost me my life. It was distressing to hear it. I carried it with me in my chaise to Wilmington. In passing through the streets, its affecting cries surprised every one within hearing, particularly the females, who hurried to the doors and windows with looks of alarm and anxiety. I drove on, and arriving at the piazza of the hotel, where I intended to put up, the landlord came, and a number of other persons who happened to be there, all equally alarmed at what they heard. This alarm was greatly increased, by my asking whether he could furnish me with accommodations for myself and baby. The man looked blank, and foolish, while the others stared with great astonishment."

"After diverting myself for a minute or two at their expense, I drew my Woodpecker from under the cover, and a general laugh took place. I took him up stairs, and locked him up in my room, while I went to see my horse taken care of. In less than an hour I

returned, and on opening the door, he set up the same distressing shout, which now appeared to proceed from grief, that he had been discovered in his attempts to escape. He had mounted along the side of the window, nearly as high as the ceiling, a little below which he had began to break through. The bed was covered with large pieces of plaster; the lath was exposed for at least fifteen inches square, and a hole large enough to admit the fist opened to the weather boards; so that in less than another hour, he would certainly have succeeded in making his way through.

"I now tied a string around his leg, and fastening it to the table, again left him. I wished to preserve his life, and had gone off in search of suitable food for him. As I reascended the stairs, I heard him again hard at work, and on entering, had the mortification to perceive that he had almost entirely ruined the mahogany table to which he was fastened, and on which he had wreaked his whole vengeance.

While engaged in taking the drawing, he cut me severely in several places, and on the whole displayed such a noble, and unconquerable spirit, that I was frequently tempted to restore him to his native woods."

These birds lay their eggs in the bodies of trees, generally selecting for this purpose one of the largest they can find. The pair assist each other in the work of digging out a large cavity, which is sometimes four or five feet deep, and at the bottom of which it is scooped out in form of a dish, to contain the eggs and bird.

The common note of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker, resembles the sound of a trumpet, or the high tone of the clarionet, and is repeated every three or four sec-

onds. It is so loud as to be heard to the distance of half a mile or more, though it seems to be within a few rods of the hearer.

The more we study the works of creation, as presented in the different kinds of animals, the more we shall be convinced that there was a design in forming each one for the peculiar mode of life which it lives.

If we particularly examine the bird, whose history is given above, we shall be struck with the fact, that every part of him is formed exactly for the kind of life which he leads. His bill is strong, hard, and polished, so as to enter the wood with the greatest ease; his head is large and heavy, answering all the purposes of a hammer; his neck is longer than most land birds, by which the greater force is given to his head; his claws are sharp, and placed, two forward, and two backward, in the best position for grasping, or holding on to the side of a tree, and climbing; his tongue is long, hard, pointed, and barbed, for the purpose of drawing his food from the cavities of the wood, and his eyes are sharp and piercing, and so placed as that he can look directly forward to the point of his bill, and see the smallest insect under the bark of the tree.

THE KING-FISHER.

The King-fisher tribe frequent the banks of rivers, and the shores of lakes and ponds. They live on small fish, which, diving down, they catch with much dexterity. Their bills are sharp at the end, and are

large and long. They do not seize their prey with their claws, like the fish-hawk, but take it with their bills. There are several species of this tribe, only one of which is found in this country.

THE BELTED KING-FISHER.

How large is the Belted King-fisher?

The Belted King-fisher is about one foot long, and twenty inches in extent, when the wings are spread.

What is the shape of this bird?

In shape it is short and thick; the head is large and crested; the legs short and small; and the bill remarkably long, thick, and sharp.

What is the colour of this bird?

Its prevailing colour is light blue; around the neck, there is a belt of white, from which the bird takes its name; the breast is red, mixed with blue; the under parts are white, with a spot of red just before the legs; the bill is black, with a white spot near the root of the lower mandible.

Where does the Belted King-fisher live?

This bird is found in most parts of the United States where there are rivers, seas, or lakes.

In what situation does the King-fisher make its nest?

The King-fisher makes its nest in the ground. The female finds a sandy place on the bank of the river, or lake, and there digs a hole with her bill and claws, three or four feet into the bank. Into this hole she carries some grass, and on it lays her eggs, and hatches her young.

The King-fisher is among the most beautiful of our birds. He may be seen on almost any summers' day, sitting on some dry tree or post near the water's edge,

glancing his quick and piercing eye in every direction, in search of the little fish that swim near the surface. When he sees one that suits him, he darts down, catches, and swallows it in an instant, and then flies back, and quietly takes his station again. He loves to visit brawling brooks, and such little cascades as are made by mill dams, and when he has no luck in fishing at one station, he flies swiftly to another. Sometimes in his flight, he stops, and balancing himself by a rapid motion of the wings, he dives, and having caught and swallowed a little fish, away he goes again.

RAPACIOUS BIRDS.

The Rapacious Birds live entirely on flesh, which some of them kill for themselves, while others eat only such as they find already dead. They are all furnished with sharp talons, or claws, with which they seize their prey, and with hooked bills to tear the flesh. These birds associate in pairs, but never unite in flocks. In this tribe the female is larger and stronger than the male. To this order belong the Condor, the Vultures, the Eagles, the Falcons, and the Owls.

THE CONDOR.

There is fortunately but one species of this terrible bird, and although it is of the Vulture kind, it differs so much in size, and habits, from the rest of the species, as generally to be described by itself.

What kind of bird is the Condor?

The Condor is a bird of the Vulture kind, and is much the largest and most powerful of that voracious and disgusting tribe.

How large is this bird?

The length of the Condor is about five feet, and his extent, with the wings spread, from twelve to sixteen feet.

What is the colour of this bird?

The colour of his back and wings is black, and the breast and neck are dark brown.

Are the head and neck of this bird covered with feathers, or naked?

The head and upper part of the neck are naked, or only covered with down; but the lower part of the neck is surrounded with thick feathers, resembling hair.

In what country is this bird found?

The Condor is found only in South America.

Where does the female build her nest?

The female builds her nest in the highest mountains, where men can approach, only with the greatest difficulty and danger. She raises but two young birds in each year.

Does this bird appear ferocious or innocent?

The Condor, in appearance, is one of the most terrible of all birds. His great size, his hooked bill, his

naked head, his tremendous claws, and the great comb which grows on his head, all together, make him a most frightful looking animal.

How many toes has the Condor?

This bird has four toes on each foot, three of them standing forward and one backward. They are armed with long, black, sharp claws, with which he can make the most dreadful wounds.

The Condor is not less ferocious in his manners, than he appears to be by his looks. He destroys without distinction any living creature that he can master, and his wings are so large and his strength so great, that it is said he can carry off a sheep, or calf without difficulty. Even men are afraid of his approach, and shun him as they would a wolf or tiger.

A writer who travelled in South America, states that he one day saw a Condor seated on a high rock, and having approached within gun-shot, he fired at him; but his gun being only loaded with shot, the bird was not brought to the ground, but flew to another place. The traveller then loaded his gun with a bullet, and fired at him again, when he fell to the ground mortally wounded. On going to him, the gentleman found that he was ready to defend himself in the most ferocious and formidable manner, and was obliged to call the help of another man, before he could conquer so terrible an animal.

The wings of this bird, says the traveller, were twelve feet, three inches, from one tip to the other. The quills were of a beautiful shining black, and two feet four inches long. The bill was four inches long, and of proportionate thickness; its colour was black,

except towards the end, where it was white. The head and neck were covered with a short down of a brown colour, and the eyes were black, surrounded with a circle of reddish brown. The feathers of the breast, neck, head and wings were of a brown colour; those on the back were darker. The legs were covered with brown feathers to the knee. The thigh-bones were ten inches long, and those of the legs five inches long.

In the deserts of Pachomac, in South America, says Dr. Goldsmith, where this bird is chiefly to be seen, men seldom venture to travel. Those wild regions are sufficient of themselves to inspire a secret horror; broken precipices, prowling panthers—forests only vocal with the hissing of serpents—and mountains rendered still more terrible by the Condor, the only bird that ventures to make its residence in those desolated regions.

Surely, in the history of this terrible bird, we can see the kind provision of a merciful Creator towards man. It produces only two young in a year, while some birds which are harmless and useful, produce thirty or forty young in the same time. The Condor lives only in a certain part of South America, while the birds that are most beneficial to man inhabit nearly every part of the earth. Now since all the birds were made by the same hand, it is certain that there was a design in permitting the most useful and harmless to increase in abundance, while those that are destructive and ferocious, are always few in number, and generally confined to certain parts of the earth. Were the Condors as numerous as the pigeons, or the

swallows, the earth would scarcely afford animals sufficient for their food, and even man himself would not be able to make good his defence against so strong and fierce a bird.

THE VULTURE.

The Vultures differ from the other rapacious birds in wanting feathers on the head, and upper part of the neck. They also differ from them, in choosing to devour such animals as they find already dead, rather than to kill them for their own use. There are several species of this bird, but they all agree in their habits and manners, being equally voracious, and unclean. The description of one will therefore give a good idea of all.

THE GOLDEN VULTURE.

How large is the Golden Vulture?

The Golden Vulture is four feet and a half long, and with the wings spread, about nine feet in extent. The length of the upper mandible is about seven inches, and the weight of the bird is about twelve pounds.

What is the colour of this bird?

Its colour about the breast and lower part of the neck is dull red; it is black on the back, and the wings and tail are yellowish brown.

Where does this bird live?

This bird is found in Egypt, Arabia and the southern parts of America.

Of what use to man is the Vulture?

The Vulture, although a most unclean, and voracious bird, is still, in the hot countries where it lives, a very useful inhabitant. It carries away, and devours, the carcases of dead animals, which would otherwise make the air unpleasant and sickly. Of all animals, this can smell its prey at the greatest distance.

The Vulture seems to hold the same rank among birds that the hyena does among quadrupeds. In Egypt, and other eastern countries, great flocks of them are at all times seen about every city, where they are of the greatest benefit to the inhabitants, by carrying away all sorts of putrid animal matters. So useful are they, on this account, that no person is allowed to kill, or disturb them, under the penalty of a fine; and in consequence they become quite tame, and gentle, hardly moving out of the way of persons who walk the streets.

At New Orleans, and other southern cities, these birds are seen about the streets, in the same manner as in Egypt, and there, also, no person is allowed to injure, or disturb them. They are protected and valued for the good they do in cleaning the streets.

At Brazil, and other parts of South America, it is pleasant to witness the art which these birds display in destroying the eggs of the crocodile. In that country the crocodile is one of the most terrible of all animals. He grows to the enormous length of twenty-five, or even thirty feet, and is so ferocious as to attack and destroy any land animal that comes within his reach. It is therefore a very happy circumstance, and one in which the hand of an over-ruling Providence

is clearly apparent, that the Vulture should be the means of preventing the great increase of so terrible an animal.

These ferocious monsters, were it not for the Vultures, would in a short time become so numerous, as to make it dangerous, or even impossible, for men to inhabit the country, for the females lay from one to two hundred eggs each, every year.

The Crocodiles take care to place their eggs in situations so secret, that other animals do not often find them, and having covered them with sand, they are left to be hatched by the heat of the sun. The Vultures seem to understand all this, and during the season of the year when these monstrous animals come out of the water to deposite their eggs, these birds are seen perched on some tall tree, waiting the event of such a visit. When one comes on the land, they patiently and silently watch the place to which she goes, and keep still until the huge beast has laid and covered her eggs with the sand, and returned to the water. Then, encouraging each other with loud cries, they all together, pour down upon the nest, hook up the sand with their crooked bills, and in a few minutes devour every egg the crocodile has left.

Nothing can be more filthy and offensive than these birds. The food which they prefer, is to all animals, except the hyena, the most disagreeable of objects. But notwithstanding this disgusting appetite, which renders them so hateful in the sight of men, the All-wise Creator has designed them to answer a valuable purpose in the world. The cleaning of the streets of cities in hot climates, and the destruction of the cro-

codiles' eggs, are benefits of the greatest consequence to those who inhabit such climates.

A knowledge of these benefits, in an animal so obnoxious in appearance and habits, ought to teach us to be very careful how we pronounce any of the works of creation to be useless, because we do not see the design for which they were intended. For we may be assured, that it is only our own ignorance, and want of reflection, that prevent us from perceiving that the Creator has made nothing except what is useful, in one way or another.

The Vulture is mentioned in Scripture as an unclean bird, and one that is forbidden for food. It is also mentioned in Job, Chapter 38, verse 7. "There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the Vulture's eye hath not seen."

This passage, says Miss Hewlet, alludes to the art and diligence of men in digging subterraneous ways through caverns and mines, in order to acquire the riches that are hid in the bosom of the earth. But though man is endowed with wisdom far beyond the beasts of the field, and the fowls of heaven, man has never, by his own unaided efforts, found the way to God and happiness, but is groping in the dark, and spending his strength upon that which can neither satisfy nor endure. It is not until a light from heaven reveals the path of life, and divine grace enables him to discern and pursue it, that man can attain the "fear of the Lord, which is true wisdom."

THE EAGLE.

This tribe of birds are not less rapacious than those of the vulture kind. The Eagles may readily be distinguished from the vultures by having their heads and necks fully clothed with feathers, while these parts of the vulture kind are naked. The claws and bills of the Eagles are sharper and more hooked than those of the vultures. The Eagles also differ from the vultures in their habit of killing their prey for themselves, while the vultures generally eat only such as they find already dead.

Eagles never associate in flocks, and are so solitary in their habits, that more than two of them are rarely seen together. They are extremely quick-sighted, and can see objects at an amazing distance. They often fly at such a height in the air, as to be entirely out of the sight of man; and even from such a distance, they can discern their prey on the earth, when they dart down upon it with the swiftness of an arrow. Their strength is so great, that they have been known to carry away animals nearly as heavy as themselves, to the distance of forty miles. Most of them build their nests in the highest and most difficult places in the mountains. The females of this tribe are always larger and stronger than the males. There are many species of this bird, but their habits and manners are similar, the chief difference being in their size and colour.

THE GOLDEN EAGLE.

How large a bird is the Golden Eagle?

The Golden Eagle is the largest and noblest of the Eagle tribe. His length is three feet and a half, and with his wings spread, he extends ten feet. His bill is four inches long, and he weighs twelve or fourteen pounds.

What is the colour of this bird?

The colour of his head and neck is deep brown; along the breast it is yellowish brown, and on the back, it is a darker shade of the same colour. The bill is deep blue, and the legs yellow.

What can be said of the feet and legs of this bird?

The legs of this Eagle are covered with feathers to the toes, and are very large and strong. The toes are covered with scales, and armed with the most terrible claws, the middle one being two inches long.

Where does the Golden Eagle live?

This king of birds is found in almost every country, but never in any considerable numbers at the same place.

How long does the Eagle live?

It is said that the Eagle lives to the age of an hundred years, and that he then does not die of old age, but in consequence of the growing of his bill inward, so that he cannot eat. An Eagle died at Vienna, that was known to have been in confinement upwards of a hundred years.

The Eagle, among birds, is what the lion is among quadrupeds. His strength and swiftness give him the mastery over nearly all the feathered creation. Like the lion, the Eagle is said to be generous, and some-

times so merciful as not to attack small and weak animals, when he can find those that are larger and stronger. It is not until he has long suffered the insulting cries of the rook and magpie, that this noble bird thinks fit to punish them for their folly. Like the lion, the Eagle disdains to share his plunder with any other animal; and, unless pressed with hunger, will not eat any thing which he has not killed himself. Like him, also, the Eagle is solitary, always driving away all other rapacious birds, and keeping the desert where he lives to himself. It is as uncommon to see two pairs of Eagles in the same mountain, as it is to see two lions in the same desert. The lion and the Eagle have both fierce, sparkling eyes; their claws are of the same form, and the cry of both is equally terrible to the beasts of the forest and the fowls of the air.

The Eagle is tamed with great difficulty; and even when taken young and treated with kindness, will sometimes turn upon his master, and wound him in a terrible manner.

Of all birds, the Eagle flies the highest, and can see to the greatest distance; but his sense of smelling is not so good as that of the Vulture. He is so strong, as to fly away with lambs, kids, geese, and sometimes even with children. In Scotland, a child happening to be at play out of doors, an Eagle flew down, took it up, and carried it to his nest. But fortunately, the poor infant received no injury on the journey, and the affrighted parents pursuing after the robber, went to the nest in time to take it away, before it was in the least hurt.

The Eagle is at all times powerful and ferocious, but

is particularly so at the time when he is bringing up his young. At this time the pair make use of all their courage, strength, and fierceness, in order to provide meat for their brood.

The quantity of provision which these birds carry to their young, is sometimes sufficient to maintain a family. Mr. Smith, in his history of Kerry, a county in Ireland, relates that during a season of famine, a poor man obtained nourishment for himself and children by robbing a pair of young eagles of the food which was brought them by their parents. When the young birds became large enough to fly, the poor man clipped their wings, so as to keep them in the nest, and thus make the old ones continue to bring them food. In this manner was this poor family supported, with kids, lambs, geese, and hens, during the summer.

It was fortunate for this man, that the Eagles never caught him at their nest, for had this been the case, his life would have been in danger from their fury, as may be seen by the following story.

A man in the county of Kerry determined to rob an Eagle's nest, which was on an island, of its young. He accordingly swam to the island, at a time when he saw that the old birds were away, and having secured the young ones, was returning to the land, having waded into the water nearly up to his neck. At this moment the old Eagles returned, and finding that their young were not in the nest, but in the hands of the man, they fell upon him with such tremendous fury, as to kill him in the water.

The nest of the Eagle is commonly built among mountains, and in places where it is most difficult for

men to ascend. It is constructed with much labour, being about six feet across, and containing more than a cart-load of dry sticks, and the roots of trees. These birds, it is said, never build but one nest, but continue to occupy the same, repairing it from year to year, as long as they live. The nest is not hollow, like those of other birds, but flat on the top. The eggs are only two in number, and it is often the case, that only one of these is hatched.

The Eagle is often alluded to in the Scriptures, and sometimes in a very interesting and striking manner.

The 59th chapter of Job contains a description of the habits of this bird, which is wonderfully true and sublime. "Doth the Eagle," says Jehovah to Job, "mount up at thy command, and make her nest on high? She dwelleth and abideth on the rock, upon the crag of the rock, and the strong place. From thence she seeketh the prey, and her eyes behold afar off; her young ones also suck up blood, and where the slain are, there is she."

In this striking description, says Miss Hewlet, are displayed both the wisdom and greatness of the Crea tor, and the insignificance and impotence of man. Man cannot control the movements of the Eagle, nor direct his flight; nor did he derive from man his desire, or strength to soar among the clouds, nor his choice of the inaccessible precipice for his abode. His vigorous frame, his daring temper, and all his instincts, are the contrivance and the work of God. The design of the Creator in directing the Eagle thus to build is obvious. On the brow of the precipice, this king of the feathered race, and this terror of

the smaller quadrupeds, dwells in solitary security, and rears his young almost beyond the reach of danger.

The great height to which the Eagle flies, and the lofty places in which she builds her nest, are figurative of the proud and lofty manner in which sinners sometimes lift themselves up, when they seem to think that they are above the reach of calamity or misfortune. But though they exalt themselves as high as the Eagle's flight, and hide themselves in places as secure as her nest, yet, if they provoke the righteous indignation of God, he will assuredly bring them down, and in his own time level them with the dust of the earth.

The swiftness of this bird through the air, is alluded to, in the book of Job, as a figure of the rapid flight of time. "My days are passed away as the swift ships, as the Eagle that hasteth to his prey." Job, chapter 9th, verse 26.

In another place the flight of this bird is mentioned as an emblem of the uncertainty of wordly possessions. "Riches certainly make to themselves wings, they fly away as an Eagle towards heaven." Proverbs, chap. 23, verse 5. This may remind worldly men, that after all their pains to lay up money, there is no certainty, that even in this world, their ill-gotten wealth will be of any permanent advantage to them, for their riches may all at once fly away and leave them in poverty. A good lesson to the expectations of mortal creatures, and a warning, that if they would possess durable riches, they must lay up their treasures in heaven.

The strength and wide spreading wings of this bird are alluded to in the Scriptures, in comparison with the care, which the Lord took of his chosen people.

"Ye have seen what I did unto Egypt, and how I bare you on Eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself." Exodus, chap. 19, verse 4. Again, in another passage, it is written, "As the Eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings; so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him." Deuteronomy, chap. 32, verse 11.

These passages both refer to the manner in which the Lord supported the children of Israel, and led them out of their bondage in the land of Egypt.

One reflection, in the language of Miss Hewlet, shall close what we have to say concerning the Eagle. "The Christian, like the Eagle, should soar in the daily exercise of his faith, and contemplation, to the glorious realities of an invisible world; he ought to have no communion with the earth, nor be dragged down to inferior objects, nor grovel in the dust; but always mount upwards, and gaze with Eagles' eyes on the Sun of Righteousness."

THE FISH-HAWK.

[*This bird is also called the Fishing Eagle.*]

How large is the Fish Hawk?

The Fish Hawk is two feet long, and five feet and a half in extent.

What is the colour of this bird?

His colour, on the head, is brown, spotted with white; the back, tail, and wings are dark brown, and the throat, breast, and under parts, are white.

Where does this bird live?

The Fish Hawk is found in Europe and in America. He resides chiefly on the sea coasts, and about large rivers and lakes.

What is the food of this bird?

His food consists entirely of fish, which he catches by diving into the water.

Where does this bird build its nest?

The nest of this bird is built on the top of some dead or decaying tree, and is so large as to be seen at a great distance.

The Fish Hawk migrates to the south on the approach of winter, and returns to our coasts again in the spring. His appearance in the spring is hailed by the fishermen as indicating the arrival of the herring, shad, and other fish.

The habits of this bird are harmless and sociable. He often builds within a short distance of houses, and is protected and valued by the farmers, on account of the good he does in driving the crows and black-birds out of the neighbourhood.

During the time when the female is sitting on her eggs, the male is very attentive to her, and often supplies her with fish. In an instance where the female had lost one of her feet, so that she could not well fish for herself, the male constantly supplied her with provision, so that she never left her nest to seek food for herself. For several seasons, this kindness was observed by the people who lived near the nest.

They watch their young with much tenderness, one of the pair staying about the nest, and keeping guard over them, while the other goes out to bring them a supply of provisions. On the approach of any person

at this time, the old birds seem in much distress, and utter a plaintive cry, at the same time taking wing, and sailing around the nest. Sometimes, also, they dive down, as though to attack the person, but usually mount up again without coming very near him. In some instances, however, they have been known to attack persons who have climbed up to their nest, and to wound them in a terrible manner.

The actions of this bird during a fishing excursion, and the manner in which he seizes his prey, are quite interesting. When he leaves his nest on such an occasion, he goes directly to the fishing ground, flying in a straight line, and not very high in the air. Having come to the water, he rises two hundred feet or more into the air, and sails elegantly and slowly along, eyeing the face of the deep, in search of his game. Suddenly he stops, to survey more particularly any fish that he happens to see, but generally glides along again in a moment or two. Again he stops, and balancing himself by flapping his wings, looks intently into the water, now and then rising or sinking a little, as if to obtain a better view of his object. Having taken his aim, he now descends from his great height, with the swiftness of a leaden bullet, and plunging into the water with a loud rustling sound, buries himself for a moment under its surface. He then rises, with his struggling prey hanging on his claws, and when a few feet high, stops and flutters to shake the water from him, which flies in the form of spray in every direction. Having thus prepared himself for his flight, he shapes his course directly for the land, and quietly eats his fish, sitting on the limb of a dry tree, or carries it to his young.

It sometimes happens, however, that the Fish Hawk is neither permitted to eat his prey himself, nor carry it to his young, but is obliged to yield it up to the bald eagle, who generally lives by robbing the present species.

While the Fish Hawk is at work, as above described, in order to provide for himself or family, the lazy bald eagle is comfortably seated on some dry tree in the neighbourhood, watching his motions, and expecting a good meal whenever his labours are successful. Now and then, while the industrious Fish Hawk is pursuing his prey, this indolent pirate shakes his feathers, and prepares his wings for the pursuit, the instant he shall see the good luck of his neighbour.

When, therefore, the Fish Hawk rises with his prey, the eagle begins the chase. The Fish Hawk often seems to know that his enemy is in the neighbourhood, and therefore the moment he comes out of the water, tries to avoid the robber, by rising as fast as possible into the air. This he does by making small circles, gradually rising upward in the form of a screw. The Eagle, meantime exerts all his strength and swiftness, in attempting to rise above the other, and in this manner the contest is sometimes continued for half an hour, or more, the Hawk constantly screaming, in a loud and distressing voice. At last the pursued, finding that his enemy has gained upon him, and that, with all his exertions, he cannot escape, drops the fish, which is nearly in every instance caught by the eagle, before it reaches the ground; and thus the poor hungry Hawk is left to do his work over again.

The conduct of the bald eagle is an apt emblem of

the course pursued by certain men in this world. For how often do we see persons, who are themselves lazy and worthless, living comfortably on the earnings of industrious and hard working people. Perhaps these persons are not guilty of robbing outright, or of cheating in such a manner as to be brought before the magistrate, and punished according to law. But they contrive to take the advantage of the ignorant and laborious, in such a manner as to get into their own hands most of their earnings, and thus to live in idleness on the sweat of another's face. Such vile and deceitful conduct may possibly escape punishment in this world; but that God, who sees the hearts of men, and knows all their secret actions, will most assuredly punish such injustice at the day of final account.

THE FALCON.

The Falcon is another of the Rapacious tribes of birds. They agree with the eagle in having their heads and necks covered with feathers, and in having sharp hooked bills and strong claws. They are, in general, much smaller than the eagles, but like them they live by catching game, which commonly consists of the smaller birds of the forest. Some of them visit the farm yards, and carry off the chickens, and one variety lives chiefly on serpents. These birds are more commonly known under the name of Hawks. There are many varieties of them, but with one or two exceptions, they agree very nearly in form and habits.

THE SECRETARY FALCON.

How large a bird is the Secretary Falcon?

The Secretary Falcon is one of the largest of this tribe, being about three feet high from the ground to his head.

What is the form of this bird?

In form this bird resembles both the eagle and the crane. Its head and bill are like those of the eagle, while its legs and body are similar to those of the crane.

Why is this bird called Secretary Falcon?

This bird is called *Secretary* Falcon, because there grow from the back of his head several long feathers, which make him look like a secretary, or writer, with his pen placed behind his ear.

Where is this bird found?

The Secretary Falcon lives in Africa and Asia, but has not been seen wild in any other country.

What is its colour?

Its colour on the back and breast is bluish white; the tail is ash coloured, except near the end, where it is black; around the eyes, the colour is deep orange.

On what food does this bird live?

This Falcon lives chiefly on serpents, in the taking of which he displays a great deal of cunning.

It would appear from the habits of this singular bird, that Providence had designed him as one of the means of preventing the great increase of serpents in those hot climates, where he is chiefly to be found. In seizing these dangerous reptiles, this bird always has regard for his own safety. When he comes to a serpent, he is always careful to carry the point of one of his wings forward, in such a manner as to prevent the

reptile from wounding his flesh with his poisonous teeth. Sometimes he takes the serpent on one of his wings, and throws it into the air, and after having worried it in this way for a time, he takes the first safe opportunity of despatching it, by a single blow on the head with his bill. He then makes a comfortable meal of his fallen enemy, at his leisure.

This Falcon is easily tamed, and when domesticated, will eat any kind of food, whether raw, or cooked. If well fed, he will not only live with hens and chickens, on friendly terms, but when he sees any of them quarrelling, will run and part them, and restore order and harmony in the poultry yard. If, however, he is neglected, and becomes hungry, he will satisfy his appetite from among the chickens with which he had lived on such kind and familiar terms.

THE COMMON FALCON.

[*This bird has also been called Gentil Falcon.*]

How large is the common Falcon?

The common Falcon is about two feet long, from the bill to the end of the tail; but the body is small and light, only weighing three or four pounds.

What colour is this bird?

The colour of his beak is reddish; the head and neck are brown, with black spots; the back and wings are brown; the tail is striped across with black and ash colour, and tipped with white.

Where is this bird found?

This Falcon is found in Scotland, France, and other parts of Europe.

What is the shape of this bird?

The shape of the Falcon is similar to that of the eagle, only that the bill is still more hooked, and the whole appearance of the bird is more slender and sprightly. His legs and feet are exceedingly strong, and his wings very long and powerful, in proportion to the weight of his body.

Formerly this bird was tamed, and taught to catch other birds, for the use of his master. The training of the Falcon for this purpose was called *Falconry*, and the hunting with him was called *Hawking*.

Among the ancient nobility of England, hawking was considered as the most noble and princely of all sports. Falconry, or the training of the Hawk, was, therefore, a business of great importance. The king's Falconer, or the man who took care of his Hawks, was among the most dignified officers of his household, and the expense attending this sport was so great, that none but men of wealth could afford to indulge themselves in it. During these times, a pair of Hawks sometimes sold for a thousand dollars, our money, and in one instance, even five thousand dollars were paid for an extraordinary brace of these birds.

At the present day, we look with pity and contempt on such silly and wicked extravagance; and yet in our own times, we have many fashions, which, if they are not as expensive, are fully as ridiculous, and which will be looked upon by future generations with equal contempt and pity.

The Falcon is a bird of very extraordinary ferocity, courage, and strength. When tamed, and trained for Hawking, he is, however, under the complete com-

mand of his master, and, when taken out for sport, was carried sitting on his hand.

These birds would fly with such force, and knew so well in what part to strike their game, that they would pounce upon any other bird, however large. The stork, the heron, and the crane, each of which is two or three times the size of the Falcon, were their common game. They always struck their prey under the wing, and in a few minutes so disabled it with their beaks and claws, as to bring it to the ground.

If the Falcon did not succeed in striking his game, he always returned, and took his seat again on the Falconer's hand; but when the game was struck to the ground, he staid and kept it down until his master came and took it from him.

The training of these wild and ferocious birds, so as to make them fly and return as occasion required, and to be under the entire command of their masters, required much time and experience. Men made this kind of instruction the business of their lives, and often became rich by the sale of their birds. This kind of instruction was indeed, at one time considered a matter of so much importance, that books, almost without number have been written on the best methods of training a Hawk.

We cannot here go fully into this subject, but perhaps a short account of the common mode of training these birds may gratify some of our young readers. It is indeed an interesting part of natural history, to inquire how the nature and habits of animals can be changed by the discipline of man.

The first lesson which the Falconer taught his bird,

was, to submit patiently to be blindfolded, or to have his eyes covered from the light. This was done chiefly by starving the poor bird until he made no resistance to having his hood put on or taken off. As a reward for such quiet submission, he was always fed with some delicate morsel, and thus gradually became attached to his instructor.

After the first lesson had succeeded, the bird was carried out of doors, the hood taken off, and by means of food and persuasion, he was taught to jump on the hand of his master, and to sit quietly there. After this he was made acquainted with the *lure*. The lure was the skin of a bird stuffed; and care was taken that it should be of the kind which it was intended the Falcon should pursue for game, when he actually engaged in Hawking. On this there was placed some delicate food, which the bird was permitted to eat. The use of the food was to flatter the bird to come back, after he had flown into the air and also to attach him to the living bird, which the lure represented, when he should be permitted to fly at it in the field.

During the period of this instruction, the Hawk was tied with a long string, so that he could not escape; and after these lessons had been many times repeated and properly learned, the bird was shewn the live game instead of the lure, but so tied that it could not escape, and on this he was permitted to pounce.

After the Falconer had exercised his Hawk in this manner for some time, and found that the bird was so attached to him, as to obey his call from a distance, and come and perch upon his hand without fear, he then took him out into the field for actual sport.

When in the field, the Falconer removed the hood by which his eyes were covered, and gave him his full liberty, at the same time shewing him the game, of which the lure was made. At this he would generally fly with avidity, and soon bring it to the ground; when his master would give him a large piece of meat as a reward for his courage. Sometimes, however, he would take this opportunity to escape, never to return, thus leaving the disappointed Falconer nothing but regret for all his pains. But more commonly the master never gave him his freedom, until well assured of his attachment and obedience.

By long perseverance in this method of instruction, the Falcon may be taught to fly at any game whatever, and to bring to the ground almost any bird, not larger than himself.

The sport, if such it can be called, consists in beholding the ferocity and swiftness with which the attack is made; the terror and dismay into which the game is thrown by such an attack; and the art employed by the two birds, the one escaping for his life, and the other pursuing to destroy.

Some particular birds, such as the heron and woodlark, are said to afford the finest sport to the lovers of such scenes. These birds, the moment they find themselves pursued by the Hawk, instantly take to the skies. They fly almost perpendicularly upwards, while their rapacious pursuer keeps pace with their flight, and makes use of all his strength of wing, in trying to rise above them. As the spectator watches the contest, both birds gradually appear smaller, in proportion as they go from him, until they are lost

from his sight among the clouds. But they are soon after seen coming down together, struggling desperately with each other, the one to escape, the other to grasp, and disable his prey. But this unequal combat is generally soon finished, for the Falcon, by means of his hooked bill, and terrible claws, tears the poor defenceless lark in such a manner, as to disable, or even kill it, before they reach the ground. This, among the lovers of such cruelty, is called delightful sport.

The reason why animals were made so differently from each other is unknown to us, and therefore we have no right to find the least fault with the works of creation. We however see that some are made weak, and without the least means of defence, while others are strong, and armed in a most powerful manner. We see, also, that some are apparently designed for the food of others, and there is no doubt, but in this, the Creator consulted the sum total of happiness, to be enjoyed by the whole brute creation. Among the fowls of the air, as well as among the beasts of the field, we see that one kind is designed to prey upon another kind. The Falcon, from the very fact of his having claws for seizing his prey, a hooked bill for tearing its flesh, and an appetite for flesh and blood, was evidently designed to live by the destruction of other animals. In doing this, therefore, he makes use of the only means in his power to satisfy his appetite, and must either destroy life or perish himself.

But the question arises, whether man, the lord of created things on earth, has a just right to assist one animal in the cruel destruction of another, merely for

his own amusement. The Falcon, when he pursues the timid lark, at the command of his master, does not do it for the purpose of satisfying his own hunger, or that of the sportsman, but he is taught to do this merely to gratify the curiosity of a number of idle spectators. It is therefore certain, that Hawking is both unjust and wicked, because it gives great pain, without satisfying any natural appetite, and exhibits a scene of wanton cruelty, calculated to harden the hearts, and deprave the tastes of men, without any good motive.

THE BUZZARD.

What kind of a bird is the Buzzard?

The Buzzard is a bird of the falcon kind, but is far less beautiful, and not so swift, nor so easily taught as the true falcon.

How large is this bird?

His length is about a foot and a half, and with the wings spread, he is about three feet and a half in extent.

What is the colour of this bird?

His back is of a dark ash colour, which grows paler along the breast, and under parts; his wings and tail are marked with dark coloured bars; the legs are yellowish, and the claws black.

What is the form of the Buzzard?

The form and appearance of this bird are between those of the falcon and the owl. His body, wings, and tail are short, like those of the owl, and his eyes are similar to the owl's, but not so large. His legs, claws, and bill, are like those of the falcon.

Where is this bird found?

The Buzzard lives in most parts of Europe, and is also found in America.

Is this bird ever trained for Hawking?

This bird is so lazy in his habits, and so stupid in his character, that he is not capable of being taught, like other falcons, to fly after game, and obey the call of his master.

What is the food of the Buzzard?

The food of this bird consists chiefly of frogs, mice, and such insects, as he can catch without the trouble of flying after them.

The following anecdote of one of these birds, is told by Buffon, and was related to him by one of his friends. It shews, contrary to the common opinion, that the Buzzard can be tamed, and be made to know his master, and attach himself to him.

A Buzzard was taken in a snare, and given to Buffon's friend. At first he was wild and ferocious, but on leaving him without food for a time, he became more tame, and would eat out of the hand. In about six weeks, he became quite familiar, and was allowed to go out of doors, though with his wings tied, to prevent his flying away. In this condition he walked about the garden, and would return when called to be fed.

After some time, he became quite tame, and seemed to be attached to his master, and then his wings were untied, a small bell was attached to his leg, and a piece of copper was fastened around his neck, with the owner's name marked on it. He was then given full liberty to go where he pleased, which, however,

he soon abused by flying away into the woods. The gentleman now gave up his Buzzard as lost, but in four hours afterwards, he rushed into the house, followed by five other Buzzards, from whose attacks he was glad to seek a place of safety. After this caper he became more tame and familiar than before, and so attached himself to his master, as to sleep every night, in his bed-room. He was always present at dinner, and sat on one corner of the table. He would caress his master with his head and bill, but would do this to no other person.

One day, when the gentleman rode on horseback, the Buzzard followed him several miles, constantly flying near him, or over his head.

This bird did not like either dogs or cats, but was not in the least afraid of them. Sometimes he had battles with these animals, but always came off victorious. To try his courage, four strong cats were collected together in the garden with the bird, and some raw meat was thrown to them. The bird beat them all, so that they were glad to retreat, and then took all the meat himself.

This Buzzard had such a hatred to red caps, that he would not suffer one to be on the head of any person in his presence. And he was so expert at taking them off, that the laborers in the field, who wore them, often found themselves bare-headed, without knowing what became of their caps. He now and then would also snatch away wigs, without doing the wearer any other injury than stealing his property. These caps and wigs, he always carried into a tree, the tallest in the neighbourhood, which was the place where he deposited all his stolen goods.

He would never suffer any other bird of the rapacious kind to stay near his dwelling, but would attack them boldly and put them to flight. He did no mischief among his master's poultry, nor were the chickens, and young ducks, after a while afraid of him. But he was not kind to the hens and chickens of his neighbours, and would sometimes pounce upon them; so that his master was often obliged to advertise that he would pay for all mischief his Buzzard might be guilty of. He was, however, frequently fired at, and at different times received fifteen musket shots, without however having a bone broken.

Once, while flying near a forest, he dared to attack a young fox, which being seen by a man, he was fired at twice. The fox was killed by the shot, and the bird had his wing broken, but contrived to escape from the man, and was lost for seven days. The man knowing by the noise of the bell on the bird to whom he belonged, went and informed the owner what he had done. Search was made, but the Buzzard could not be found. A whistle, which used to call him home, was blown every day, for six days, but the bird made no answer. On the seventh day, however, he answered with a feeble cry, and was soon found with his wing broken, being very weak and lean. He had walked a mile and a half from the place where he was wounded, and had nearly reached his master's house. In six weeks, his wounds were healed, and he began to fly about, and follow his old habits as before. Thus he continued for about a year, when he disappeared, never to return. Whether he was killed, or escaped from choice was not known.

THE OWL.

This rapacious tribe of birds, instead of pursuing their prey in the day-time, like those already described, make war upon their fellows only during the night, and like pirates and cowards, fall upon their victims when they cannot defend themselves. Their eyes are so constructed, that they can see much better at the dusk of evening than by the light of the sun. Their heads are round, and their eyes large and staring, like those of the cat. Their bills and claws are hooked and strong, and their whole form calculated for rapine and plunder. They live on mice, young birds, and such other small animals as they can catch. There are about forty varieties of this bird, all of which have similar habits and manners.

THE GREAT HORNED OWL.

How large is the Great Horned Owl?

The Great Horned Owl is two feet and a half long, and five feet in extent.

What is the shape of this bird?

In shape, this bird appears short and thick, the head is broad and large, and on the top of it there rise two tufts of feathers, which look like horns, and from which he takes his name.

What is his colour?

His colour is yellowish red, elegantly spotted with black and brown; the legs are reddish, and feathered to the toes.

Where is this bird found?

This Owl is a common inhabitant of Asia, Europe, and America.

The Owl is a ferocious, sly, and savage bird. He does not, like the eagle and falcon, attack his prey by broad day-light, and give it a chance to escape, but like the deceitful robber, goes under the cover of night and wages war, when it is least expected. The Owl cannot, however, see best in the darkest nights, as some people suppose. It is in the dusk of the evening, and in the grey of the morning that his eyes are best fitted for seeing; and it is at these times, that he is most successful in seizing his prey, for he then finds most other birds asleep, and has only to seek, and take such as he likes best.

There is, however, considerable difference in the several species of this bird, in respect to their being able to see in the day time. The Great Horned Owl can see to fly soon after sun-set, and even if caught away from home in the day time, he will sometimes find his way back. But the Barn Owl sees best when it is quite dark, and if he happens to be caught at a distance from his hole, when the sun shines, becomes blind, and seemingly stupified with the light, and will not move from the place where he is found, until it begins to grow dark.

The Great Horned Owl brings up its young in the cavern of a rock, or in the hollow of some old tree, far in the woods. Its nest is built of sticks, bound together with the small roots of trees, and lined on the inside with leaves.

These birds are strongly attached to their offspring, and when they are stolen and carried away, the parents will sometimes seek out the place where they are confined, and continue to supply them with food.

A gentleman lived near a steep mountain, in which a pair of these Owls had made their nest. One day, his servant found one of the young Owls, which had strayed away from the others, and having caught it, carried it home, and confined it in a hen coop. The next morning a dead partridge was found before the door of the coop. This, the gentleman supposed had been left there by the parent birds, in order to supply their unfortunate young one with provisions; and this proved to have been the case, for every night, for fourteen nights afterwards, some provision was found to have been left in the same place. The gentleman and his servant watched at the window for several nights, in order to ascertain at what time this supply of food was brought; but in this they were disappointed, for it seems that the bird was so quick-sighted as to see them at the window, and would not come and lay down her food, as long as she was watched. But the moment they left the window, she laid down the provision and flew away.

The old birds continued this care, until the young one had arrived at an age when young owls are usually left by their parents to take care of themselves, when no further supply was brought.

THE SCREECH OWL.

The Screech Owl is so called on account of the peculiar and distressing noise it makes in the night. Its voice is harsh and squeaking, and its notes rapid and disagreeable. Timid persons have often been dreadfully frightened by the noise of this bird, when they did not know its cause.

This Owl is much smaller than the great horned owl, being only about one foot long. Its feathers are soft and beautiful, and its colour a mixture of yellow and ash-colour, spotted with white. The breast, and under parts are nearly white, and the legs feathered down to the claws.

This Owl feeds on mice and small birds, and hunts only during the night. In the day-time, when the sun shines, it is so blind as to be unable to fly from one tree and light on another, and hence it commonly returns home before the light of the sun appears. Sometimes, however, when its success has not been such as to satisfy its appetite, it is so imprudent as to remain abroad, until the sun rises, and thus to become blind, by the same cause that enables all other animals to see. Nothing can be more distressing to the poor bird than such an accident, since it is now, as much at a loss to find its way home, as a child would be, if left in the woods during the darkest night.

Dazzled by the light, and bewildered in total blindness, it is obliged to take shelter in the first tree, or hedge it can find, and there hide itself, until the darkness of evening enables it to return home. But it often happens that the poor bird cannot conceal itself, so that the birds of day will not spy out its hiding place, and then it is sure to receive no mercy. All the little birds of the air seem to know that this is their natural enemy, and that now is their time to take vengeance upon him. The black-bird, the robin, the thrush, the king-bird, and the jay, all come in a crowd to offer their insults and abuse.

The smallest, and most contemptible enemies of the bewildered Owl, are now the most forward to torment and injure him. They set up their loudest cries; fly at him; flap him in the face with their wings; and, like all other cowards, make the greatest shew of courage, when there is the least danger. The unfortunate Owl, not knowing where he is, or from what quarter the next attack is to be made, and being equally unable to escape, or defend himself, adopts the best plan in his power, and that is, to sit still, and bear with stupidity the insults, and evils, which he cannot avoid. His little tormentors are, however, careful not to indulge in their sports too long, for they know, that as soon as the light is gone, their enemy will triumph instead of themselves, and therefore before the sun is fairly down, not one of them is seen, in the vicinity of the Owl.

THE OSTRICH.

The Ostrich tribe presents only two species. In both, the legs are long and naked; the wings are short and useless for flying; the neck is long, and the bill flat; one species has two toes, and the other three, and all of them placed forwards. Besides the Ostrich, the Cassowary belongs to this tribe. They are the largest birds known.

OSTRICH.

How large is the Ostrich?

The Ostrich is the largest of all birds, his head being from seven to nine feet high, and his back about four feet from the ground.

What is the shape of the Ostrich?

His shape is similar to that of the crane. His legs and neck are very long, his body short, and his head small.

What is the colour of the Ostrich?

The colour of this bird, on the back and breast is perfectly black; the long feathers of the tail and wings are white; the legs and neck are yellowish white; the neck is covered with thin hair; the legs are entirely naked of feathers, and covered with scales.

How many toes has this bird?

The Ostrich has only two toes on each foot; of these, the inside one is much the longest, being seven inches in length, and ending in a claw, or nail. The other is four inches long, and without a nail.

Is this a rapacious bird?

This bird, though so large, and powerful, does not prey upon other animals, but is perfectly harmless, when not pursued, or insulted.

On what kind of food does this bird live?

His food is chiefly of the vegetable kind, such as nuts, herbs, and grass; but he is exceedingly voracious in his appetite, and will swallow leather, buttons, tobacco, stones, bullets, or any thing else that is thrown to him.

Where does this bird live?

This bird is found in the hot and barren deserts of Africa and Asia.

Is this a solitary or a social bird?

The Ostrich is a very social bird. In the deserts where they live, they are sometimes seen in large flocks, which, at a distance, appear like a troop of soldiery.

The Ostrich is as singular in his habits and manners, as he is in his form and appearance. He inhabits the most solitary and barren deserts, where there are only a few vegetables, and where it seldom or never rains. The Arabs say that this bird never drinks, and probably this is true, for in the country he chiefly inhabits, no water is to be found.

Like the elephant, this bird never multiplies out of his native country, so that every Ostrich seen in Europe and America, has once been an inhabitant of the deserts of Africa or Asia.

When this bird runs, he makes a proud and lofty appearance, but he cannot, like most of the feathered species, rise from the ground, and fly into the air. His wings are so short, and small, that he cannot raise himself with them from the ground, but they assist him greatly in running, so that he can outrun the swiftest horse.

The Ostrich lays her eggs in the sand, without the trouble of preparing a nest, like most other birds. The eggs are nearly as large as the head of a child, and weigh about fifteen pounds each. During the day, when the sun shines, these eggs remain sufficiently warm, and the bird leaves them, to go in search of food for herself; but at night she carefully broods over them; and in this it is said, the male is sometimes so kind, as to take turns with her.

These birds, during the time they are hatching their eggs, live in small familes, one male taking care of five or six females. The eggs of the whole family are all laid in the same place, and hatched at the same time. If they are disturbed, or frightened, they sometimes forsake their nests, and never return again to them; and, if, when they are away from their own nests, they happen to meet with the eggs of another Ostrich, they will adopt them as their own and hatch the young.—It is also said, that these birds sometimes leave their young, in the same manner they do their eggs, and never again return to them.

The eggs of the Ostrich, in the country where they are found, are considered the most delicate kind of food. One egg will make a good dinner for four or five persons. The flesh of this bird is also eaten by the Arabs, but is coarse, and ill-tasted, and would not be eaten by those who could obtain better meat.

The Ostrich is chiefly hunted for his feathers, which are sold in Europe and America, and are worn on the head as an article of ornament. Princes, laides and warriors, have for ages been fond of wearing the feathers of this bird, in order to attract attention, or increase the beauty of their appearance. But how degrading the thought, that reasonable beings, should be able to gain more attention from each other, by wearing the feathers of a poor silly bird.

HUNTING THE OSTRICH.

Ostriches are taken in several ways. Sometimes they are chased by dogs, or by men, mounted on horses; sometimes they are taken by nets; and sometimes

the Arabs catch them in the following manner. They take the skin of an Ostrich, and put it over the head, passing one of the arms through the neck, thus imitating in appearance one of these birds. Dressed out in this deceptive manner, the hunter goes among the Ostriches, where he is taken by them, for one of their own kind, and he having introduced himself as one of a flock, makes an easy prey of several of these unsuspecting birds.

But the most common mode of hunting the Ostrich is by means of horses, the swiftest and best of these animals being trained for this sport by the Arabs.

When an Arab intends to go out on such an expedition, he mounts a horse which has been trained to the sport, and proceeds to the hunting ground, and rides slowly and cautiously along until he discovers his game. He does not then begin the chase, and pursue directly after his game, because in that case the bird would take the alarm, and as it can outrun the swiftest horse, would flee to the mountains and be lost. He therefore proceeds slowly, and follows only at a long distance. Meantime the silly bird, not seeing his danger, instead of running in a straight line to a place of safety, goes round in a circle. The hunter now goes round also, and makes a small circle within that made by the bird, riding only so near as to keep his game constantly upon the run. While one hunter is doing this, another hunter will approach from some place which the bird does not expect, and thus make him run across the circle at full speed. In this manner the chase is continued for two or three days. At night, the bird might easily escape, did he foresee that his

enemies would again beset him in the morning; but being both stupid, and fatigued, he lies still near the place where the hunters leave him, and is thus readily found in the morning.

At last the poor bird, being worn down with fatigue, and exhausted by famine, finds when it is too late, that escape is out of his power. He then tries to hide himself from his enemies, by plunging into a thicket if one is near, or by lying close behind some little sand hill. Sometimes, however, when closely pursued, he boldly turns upon the hunters, and defends himself with all his might.

Although by nature wild and innocent, he now becomes desperate, and fights with great force with his beak, wings and feet, so that the men are obliged to escape from his rage, to save themselves from being thrown down, and trampled under his feet. Having escaped from his blows, the hunters renew the attack until the exhausted bird is no longer able to make much resistance. The silly Ostrich, then finding that both escape and defence are equally out of his power, either puts his head under his wing, or buries it under the sand, thus thinking to hide himself from the sight of his enemies, by blinding his own eyes. In this condition he is easily caught and secured by the hunters.

The Arabs after taking their game in this manner, try every means to keep it alive, and to tame it for the purpose of supplying themselves with the feathers which it sheds, these being much more valuable than those taken from the dead bird.

TAME OSTRICH.

The inhabitants of Lybia keep tame Ostriches, and raise up flocks of them every year, for the sake of procuring their feathers. Travellers, therefore, who have visited that barren country, have had opportunities of becoming acquainted with the manners of this celebrated bird. From such persons we learn that the Ostrich is by nature kind and playful; but when insulted and provoked, he makes a fierce, angry, hissing noise, and will attack those who insult him, with his bill, and strike at them with his wings and feet.—During the darkness of the night, they make a most doleful, and frightful noise, resembling the growling of the lion, or the hoarse bellowing of a cow. Sometimes the noise is like the crying of a hoarse child, but louder and more dismal.

In the heat of the day these birds strut about in the sun, holding up their heads, and fanning themselves with their wings, at the same time seeming to admire the shadows which they make. With persons of their acquaintance, they are quite familiar, and will come, when called, and eat out of the hand; but they are sometimes fierce towards strangers, and will try to push them down, by running furiously against them, and when down they will peck them with their bills, and strike them with their feet.

These birds are so strong as to be able to carry one, or even two persons, on their backs, and still to run with great swiftness.

When Mr. Adanson was at Podor, a village on the bank of the river Niger, in Africa, he saw two little ne-

groes mounted at the same time on the back of an Ostrich. The bird, as soon as they were on his back, began to move, and soon run as fast as possible, several times around the village. This sight pleased the gentleman so much, that he requested to have it repeated; and to try the strength of these birds, he desired a negro man to get on the back of a small Ostrich, and two other men to mount on that of a larger one. This weight, he states, did not seem too much for these birds. They moved at first, at a good trot, but when they became a little heated, they expanded their wings, and went along with such amazing swiftness, that they seemed hardly to touch the ground.

The Ostrich is twice mentioned in the holy Scriptures, namely in Job, chap. 39, verse 13–18, and in Lamentations, chap. 4, verse 3. The passage in Job describes the character, and habits of this bird, with wonderful correctness, and shews, that since the day it was written, the silly Ostrich has not advanced, either in wisdom, or understanding, but that she remains the same in every respect that she was three thousand years ago.

"The Ostrich, which leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmeth them in the dust, and forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them. She is hardened against her young ones, as though they were not hers. Because God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath he imparted to her understanding. What time she lifteth up herself on high, she scorneth the horse and his rider."

How perfectly this agrees with the history of this poor foolish bird, given above, and particularly where it is stated, that she leaves her eggs and her young,

and that she does not try to escape to the mountains, when chased by the horse and his rider. The same character, in part, is given her in Lamentations, where it is said, "The daughter of my people is become cruel, like the Ostrich of the wilderness."

We may consider it a singular circumstance, that an animal, which is by nature so cruel and unfeeling as to forsake her eggs, and to leave her young when they are unable to take care of themselves, should be preserved in existence. Why do not the whole race perish? Even with the greatest care, both of the eggs, and of the young, it is difficult to see how these creatures live, since they inhabit the deserts, which are so dry and barren, that any other animal, if left there by accident, would soon perish of hunger and thirst. In this, we may behold the wisdom and power of the Creator. It is he who made the Ostrish, that hath fitted her for the place in which she dwells, and has given her the means of providing for her wants, in places where other animals would perish. And is there not every reason to believe, that He, who careth for the Ostrich in the desert, and feedeth her young, when forsaken, will more especially regard the petitions of children, who humbly ask his blessing for themselves and their parents?

The character of the Ostrich seems to be made up, chiefly of pride and foolishness. It is so proud of its long neck and fluttering wings, as to admire, even its own shadow; and it is so foolish, that when pursued by the hunter, it does not run a straight course, and thus escape, but continues going round in a circle, until it is tired down and taken. Thus we see, that in

the ostrich pride and folly go together, and we are sorry to say, that in human beings we too often observe the same thing ; for whenever we see a person very proud of his looks, we may be sure that he is very foolish also.

Wisdom and goodness will always direct the person who has them, in a straight forward course, so that he commonly escapes any snare that is laid for him: but when we see a person, instead of coming directly to the truth, taking a crooked course, and going round it, as the Ostrich runs around the hunter, we may be certain that he will be caught at last, and will prove himself to be either proud, foolish, or wicked.

The Ostrich is stlll more foolish, if possible, in thinking that because she shuts her own eyes, or hides her head in the sand, that therefore, others cannot see her. But still we find that foolish and wicked people act with as little understanding as the silly Ostrich. They say to themselves, while committing crime under the darkness of the night, " no one sees me, and I shall escape punishment for this wickedness." Or in the language of Scripture, " The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it." But such persons should remember that " There is no shadow of darkness, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves," and that the darkness and the light are both alike to God.

THE CASSOWARY.

How large is the Cassowary?

The Cassowary, next to the Ostrich, is the largest of all the birds. He is about five feet and a half high from the ground to his head.

What is the shape of this bird?

His shape is similar to that of the Ostrich, but his neck, and legs are not so long, and his body is larger in proportion. His wings, like those of the Ostrich, are so short, that he cannot rise from the ground.

Where does this bird live?

This bird is found in the island of Java, and other parts of the East Indies.

What is the food of this bird?

The Cassowary, like the Ostrich, has a most voracious appetite, and is not at all particular in respect to his food. He seems to be grateful for any thing that is thrown him, whether it be leaden bullets, bits of leather, stones, or pieces of glass, and will swallow any of these substances, as though they were the best of food. He however lives chiefly on nuts, grass, and insects.

How many toes has the Cassowary?

This bird has three toes on each foot, all of which stand forward.

What is the colour of this bird?

The colour of the Cassowary is dark yellowish grey. The ends of the feathers are black, but towards the roots they are yellowish white, so that the whole appears yellowish grey. The head and neck are naked, and of a blue colour.

How long are his wings?

His wings, when the feathers are pulled out, are only about three inches long, and on each of them there are five sharp spines, or thorns, the largest of which is nearly a foot long, and a quarter of an inch thick, at the root. These are hollow, and are formed like quills.

Is the Cassowary a ferocious, or an innocent bird?

This great bird is not formed for seizing, and destroying other animals. His claws are not made for grasping his prey, nor is his bill made for tearing flesh. But his feet are formed for walking, and his bill for picking up his food from the ground.

The bill of this singular bird is four inches long; his head is small, and on its crown there grows a large, horny substance, of a black colour, which gives him a frightful appearance. The colour of his eye is bright yellow, and the eye ball being an inch and a half across, the whole aspect of the head is exceedingly odd and fierce.

About the middle of the neck there are two large bunches of skin, and at this place the neck is surrounded with feathers like a ruffle. The other parts, with the exception of the head and neck, are covered with long thin feathers, which resemble horse hair. This covering, on the back, is so long as to fall down the sides, and hide the upper parts of the legs.

The whole appearance of the Cassowary is fierce and terrible, and one who did not know his character, would nearly as soon approach a lion, as go near him. But his conduct and habits are very different from what one might expect from his looks; for instead o

attacking and destroying others, he seldom fights, except in his own defence, and then does not make use of his bill, but kicks like a horse, or runs against his pursuer, and having beat him to the ground, treads him under his feet.

The first Cassowary ever seen in Europe, was brought by the Dutch from the island of Java, about the beginning of the seventeenth century. This bird was shewn at Amsterdam as a great curiosity, and was afterwards presented to the emperor of Germany, as a rarity proper to be given to a great prince. Many years after this, another bird of the same kind was sent from Madagascar by the governor of that Island, to the king of France, and lived four years after its arrival. Since that time, these birds have often been exhibited in Europe and America; and at the present day are not uncommon.

Like the elephant and ostrich, the Cassowary has never been known to raise its young, out of their native country.

A Cassowary, which a few years since was kept at Paris, eat every day about four pounds of bread, six or seven apples, and a bunch of currants. It swallowed all its food without chewing or bruising, and drank from four to five pints of water daily.

This bird was sometimes ill-natured and mischievous. He was angry when he saw any person ragged, dirty, or dressed in red clothes, and would vent his spite at such persons, by kicking at them with his feet, and in that way would give very hard, and even dangerous blows.

In the wild state, these birds lay three or four eggs,

in the sand, which, in the hottest climates they inhabit, are said to be hatched entirely by the heat of the sun. But in countries that are colder, the female sits upon her eggs, and hatches them, like other birds.

WATER BIRDS.

We come now to a class of birds, which are quite different in their manners, habits, and shapes, from those already described. Instead of living among mountains and in forests, or taking up their abodes in cultivated fields, or about the habitations of men, they are to be found out at sea, or along the shore, or in marshes situated on the borders of lakes and rivers.

The Water Birds may be divided into two kinds, or orders, namely, the Waders and the Swimmers.

THE WADERS.

The Waders form a connecting link between the Land Birds and the Swimmers. They do not, like the Land Birds, wander among the mountains and forests, nor, like the Swimmers, do they often venture out at sea. They take the middle place, and reside in the shallow water along the shore, and hence they are sometimes found in company with both kinds.

The Waders, like the Land Birds, have most of them, their toes divided to the origin, or nearly so, while the Swimmers have theirs connected by a web, or membrane, which serves, instead of a paddle, to

force them through the water. Some of the Waders have a small membrane towards the roots of the toes, which enables them to swim when necessary. Most of them have legs of uncommon length, so that they can walk about in the water; and also long necks, by means of which they search the bottom for food.

To this Order of Birds belong the Cranes, Storks, Herons, Bitterns, Snipes, and others.

THE CRANE.

The Cranes have long legs, long necks, and long, sharp bills. Their toes are four in number, and are connected by a membrane, as far as the second joint.

The Cranes may in general be known from the herons, by their greater size, by their comparatively shorter bills, by their having no extra feathers on the head, and by the broad flag-like plumage which rises from the back, and projects over the tail. These birds live chiefly on fish, which they catch by striking them with their bills. They differ considerably in respect to size, but all of them have similar habits.

THE WHOOPING CRANE.

How large a bird is the Whooping Crane?

The Whooping Crane is four feet and a half in length, from the point of the bill to the tail. When standing, his head is five feet from the ground; and his bill is six inches long.

What is the form of this bird?

Of all the Crane tribe, this is by far the most comely. His body, neck, head, and bill, are in fine proportion to each other, and the long, flowing feathers which arise from his back, and hang over the tail, give him an air of elegance that few birds possess.

What colour is this Crane?

The colour of this Crane is chiefly ash white; the bill is yellow; above and below the eyes, there are two stripes, of an ash colour, which meet at the root of the bill. The legs, and quill feathers are black.

Where does this bird live?

The Whooping Crane is occasionally seen on the sea shore of the American continent, from Cape Horn to Canada. From these shores it migrates to the north, and spends a part of its time among the regions of perpetual ice and snow.

Of all the feathered tribes which visit the United States of America, the Whooping Crane is the largest and most stately. These birds are seen on our sea-coasts, and in low, marshy places, chiefly during the winter season. About such places, they may be seen watching with the most unwearied patience in search of small fish, and worms, which are their principal food; they also occasionally eat mice, moles, and probably frogs. Now and then they rise, and sail with a slow and heavy flight, from one fishing place to another, making, when a person is near them, a very formidable appearance.

Their migrations are of the most extensive kind, reaching to a distance equal to more than a third of the circumference of the globe, from north to south.

In the spring, or latter part of the winter, they set out on their vast periodical journies, which end in the frozen regions of Greenland and Iceland; and in the autumn they return to the warmer climates of the south. During these journies they fly at such an immense height in the air, as seldom to be seen, but their voices are so loud, as often to be heard, when the eye cannot discover them.

When started, and obliged to take wing, they make a sharp, piercing cry, which may be heard two or three miles, after which, the tone is changed into a kind of whooping sound, from which the name *Whooping* Crane is derived.

When wounded, they do not try to escape the gunner, or his dog, but when approached, boldly attack both, with great resolution and strength; nor is such a contest always safe for the man. The sharpness of their bills, and the great force with which their long necks enable them to strike, sometimes produce dreadful consequences.

A young man having wounded one of these birds, rashly went too near, when the formidable creature commenced the attack, by aiming a blow with its bill, directly at his eye. In the struggle to get away from such an enemy, the eye-ball was torn nearly from the socket, and it is hardly necessary to say, that the sight was entirely lost. In another instance, one of these birds struck a man with such force, as to drive its bill entirely through his hand.

There is a belief, that the manner in which a flock of Cranes fly, foretells a change of weather. If, in the morning, or evening, they rise upwards, and fly

peacefully in a body, it is a sign of fine weather; but if they fly low, or alight on the ground, it is said to be a sure indication of a storm or tempest. Nor is it improbable that this is true; since the same natural instinct which leads this bird to know when to begin its yearly flight, might also teach it how to shun a coming storm.

These birds rear their young in the regions of the north. Their nests are placed on the ground, amidst the most solitary and dreary swamps, and their eggs are only two in number.

The Cranes are remarkably accurate in observing the time when their long voyages are to begin, and they discover much sagacity in arranging themselves in the best manner for their flight. Each flock takes the form of the letter V, moving through the air with the sharp end forward, and being led by a particular one, probably on account of his age and experience. In case of contrary winds, they move in such close order as to appear as one body, thus taking the form which least impedes their flight.

The accuracy with which the Crane observes the time of her flight, is taken notice of in the Scriptures. "The Crane and the Swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the Lord." Jeremiah, chap. 8, verse 7.

This was a sharp reproof of the conduct of the Jews, who, though they had seen the mighty works of the Lord, were yet less mindful of his commands, than were the birds of the air to the stated times of their migrations.

THE STORK.

What kind of a bird is the Stork?

The Stork is a bird of the crane kind.

How large is the Stork?

This bird is of considerable size, measuring three feet in length, and about six feet in extent; his bill is about eight inches long.

What is the colour of this bird?

The colour of his neck, breast, and back is white; the quill feathers are black; the bill and legs are red, and around the eye there is a spot of dark brown.

What is the shape of the Stork?

The shape of the Stork is similar to that of the crane; but his body is larger, and his legs not so long as those of the crane.

Where is this bird found?

This celebrated bird is found in many parts of Europe, and in Asia; but is particularly fond of Germany, and especially the low countries of Holland.

In Holland, and in some other countries, Storks are protected from injury by law. These birds, therefore, become quite familiar with the habitations of man, and in many instances, are so far domesticated as to walk about the streets without concern, and pick up whatever food they can find.

They live chiefly on frogs, serpents and lizards, but when tamed, they will eat any kind of meat that is thrown them. In Egypt and Palestine, Storks are considered of great value, on account of their destroying rats, and mice, which, were it not for these birds, would become so numerous, as to injure the harvest.

This bird is of a mild and pleasant disposition, and

may be easily tamed, and trained to reside in gardens, which it will always keep clear of insects and reptiles. The Stork builds her nest on the tops of houses, or churches, and often in the midst of cities. In Holland, the people prepare boxes for them to build in, as we do for the martens. These birds also build in forests, always selecting the tallest trees for this purpose.

The nest is constructed with admirable skill and great labour. The materials of which it is built, are dry sticks from the woods, and coarse grass from the marshes. Throughout the whole progress of building, every thing is done in the most exact and workmanlike manner, and when the structure is finished, she examines every part of it, tries its firmness with her bill,—supplies any defects which she observes,—breaks off any ill-looking part, and does not occupy it until the whole agrees with her ideas of comfort and safety.

The natural history of the Stork, seems to have been well known to the sacred writers; and she appears in all ages to have been a particular favourite with mankind. The mutual love which a pair of these birds bear towards each other,—the care which they take of their young, and the tenderness with which they treat their parents in old age, have been celebrated as examples worthy to be imitated by human beings.

The Stork never deserts its parents, but defends and feeds them with the utmost tenderness, particularly when they grow old, and unable to take care of themselves.

A Danish author gives, from his own observations,

some interesting particulars concerning this bird. In Denmark, they build their nests among clusters of trees, many of them associating together, and forming a sort of community. If any animal comes near this place, particularly while the females are sitting, the whole society become alarmed, and they go out and commence the attack in a body. When the young are hatched, the parents watch and feed them, with the utmost anxiety and care. They never leave them alone, but when one goes away in search of food, the other stays at the nest, to see that they are warm, and that no other animal comes near them.

When the young are able to fly, the parents take them out for exercise during the day, but bring them back at night. In due time they lead them to the marshes, and point out to them their proper food, such as frogs, serpents, and lizards. They also seek out toads, which they do not eat, and take great pains to learn their young to distinguish between these reptiles and their proper food.

At the end of autumn, these birds come together in a body, and prepare for their annual migration. Before they begin their flight, they arrange themselves in due order, the old ones leading in front, then the young ones in the middle, and then again a party of old ones as a rear guard. In this order they set out on their journey.

When they return in the spring, the people assemble in crowds to welcome them as the harbingers of summer. At this time, it is not uncommon to see several

of the old birds, which are feeble and fatigued with their long journey, resting on the backs of the younger ones.

These aged parents, it is said, are laid carefully on their old nests, where they are fed and cherished by the young ones, which they reared with so much tenderness the year before.

Thus we see that the general character of the Stork is worthy of the highest praise. But we are sorry to say that he sometimes behaves in a manner not so worthy of approbation, for when insulted, he does not forgive the injury, but seeks the first opportunity of taking revenge on his enemy.

A farmer, near Hamburgh, in Germany, had a tame Stork, which lived for several years in the yard with his poultry. This bird, from his size, and the influence he exerted among the geese, ducks, and chickens, had become a kind of captain among them, and therefore, like other commanders, was quite jealous of encroachments on his own ground. It happened, however, that the farmer, not sufficiently aware of this circumstance, brought a wild Stork into the yard, as a companion for the tame one. This was exceedingly provoking to the tame Stork, who was far from wishing to divide his influence with a rival; he therefore, without considering who was to blame, fell upon the poor stranger, and beat him so unmercifully that he escaped with difficulty, but finally took wing and left the place. But this piece of ill treatment the stranger did not forget, nor forgive, for about four months afterwards he revenged himself in the most

cruel manner for the insult. Having recovered from his wounds, he came to the poultry-yard, attended by three other Storks, and no sooner had they alighted, than they all four fell upon the tame Stork, and beat him with such violence, that he died on the spot.

The Stork was spoken of by the ancients with a degree of respect bordering on veneration. Its name, in the Hebrew language, signifies pious, or merciful, and it was so named on account of the exemplary care with which these birds watch over their aged parents.

This bird is mentioned in the 104th Psalm, verse 17. "As for the Stork, the fir trees are her house."

It is believed, that there is not a reference in the Scriptures, to any animal whose natural history is known, but what is found to be strikingly appropriate and true. In the present instance, the place inhabited by the Stork is very properly called her house, since it is built with much more than common care and skill.

In the East, where the sacred writer became acquainted with the manners and habits of this bird, the houses are built with flat roofs, and are occupied by the inhabitants in the summer as sleeping places. The Stork was therefore compelled to go to the forest, where she built her nest in the fir tree, instead of making it on the roofs of houses, as she does in Holland, and in other countries. We have already stated, that when this bird builds in the woods, she selects the tallest trees for this purpose, and it is well known that the fir, is one which answers this description. The

passage is therefore, an appropriate reference to the natural habits of this bird.

It is hardly necessary to call upon parents to imitate the Stork in the care of their offspring; for the feelings of fathers and mothers towards their children, and the interest they take in their welfare, are sufficient reasons why they should do every thing for them in their power. Children, indeed, know very little how much anxiety and concern they have occasioned their parents during their infancy and childhood. The most generous actions, and the most persevering kindness, though shewing in the highest degree, both filial piety and grateful feelings, can never repay the debt which a child owes his parents. For to them, under God, he not only owes his very existence, but every comfort during years of helpless infancy.

Let children, then, imitate the Stork, by rendering all due obedience to their parents, and when they become aged, feeble, and perhaps childish, let them delight in doing every thing in their power to make their latter days comfortable and happy. In doing this, children not only do all they can to pay a debt of gratitude, which they are bound as far as possible to pay, but they perform a duty which meets the approbation of Heaven. "Honour thy father, and thy mother, which is the first commandment with promise."

THE HERON.

The Herons very nearly resemble the cranes, both in appearance, and habits. They are all waders, and live chiefly on fish, and other food which they take from the water. They have long necks, long legs, and long sharp bills, all of which are finely adapted to their mode of life. The Herons are generally less in size than the cranes, and may be distinguished from them by the long feathers on the crown of the head. They are a very numerous tribe of birds, the number of species and varieties being nearly one hundred, and some of them are to be found in almost every part of world.

THE GREAT HERON.

How large is the Great Heron?

The Great Heron is five feet and four inches high from the ground to his head, and about six feet in extent, with his wings spread; his bill is eight inches long.

What colour is this bird?

The colours of this bird, give him a very singular appearance. The crest, the lower parts of the legs, the quill feathers, and the fore part of the neck are black; upper part of the back, tail and wings, bluish slate colour; on the back and breast there grow long hair-like feathers, which are white; throat and crown of the head, white; back part of the neck light brown; the bill is yellow.

Where is the Great Heron found?

The Great Heron is an American bird, and inhabits

all the sea coast from Connecticut to Florida. This is not, like most of the tribe, a bird of passage, but a constant inhabitant of the country.

The Great Herons build their nests and rear their young in the Carolinas and other southern states.—Their places of building are solitary cedar swamps, where each bird selects the tallest tree she can find, and makes her nest on its top. The materials are chiefly dry sticks, with small twigs for the lining of the inside. A dozen pair or more often build in the same neighbourhood.

The principal food of this Heron is fish, which it catches with much skill and dexterity. He will stand at the edge of the water, with his neck curved in the form of an S, sometimes perfectly still for hours, watching for his prey. But when a fish comes within his reach, he unbends his neck and darts upon it with such sure aim, and surprising swiftness, that there is no chance of escape. He is also fond of mice, grasshoppers, and frogs.

This Heron has great strength of wing, and when on a journey, flies very high in the air. They are often seen far inland, winging their way from the lakes to the ocean. On these occasions they move slowly, but in a straight and business-like manner, neither turning, nor looking, to the right or left.

These birds are exceedingly shy, and very fearful of the presence of man. When they light, it is commonly in the middle of some extensive marsh, where they can see the approach of a gunner at a long distance, and they generally take care that he does not come too near them.

The Great Heron, if taken young, may be tamed without difficulty, but the old ones refuse all kinds of food when in captivity, and if not set free, will soon pine away and die.

The Herons are the most voracious of all eaters, the number of fish they devour being almost incredible.—The English Heron weighs only four pounds, and yet Willoughby says he has known one of them to eat sixteen carp at a meal; and Mr. Bingley states, that a bird of this kind, one day with another, was known to eat fifty fish, of moderate size.

THE BITTERN.

The Bitterns are a tribe of birds, which possess characters and habits similar to those of the cranes and herons. They live on fish and insects, and inhabit swamps and marshes, as well as the sea shore. They are smaller in size than the herons, but not so slender. Their bills are exceedingly sharp, and they are very expert at catching fish and insects.

AMERICAN BITTERN.

How large is the American Bittern?

The American Bittern is three feet three inches long from the bill to the tail; and with the wings spread, three feet and a half in extent.

What colour is this bird?

The colour of the neck, breast, and under parts of this bird is yellowish brown, spotted with dark brown;

the throat is white, spotted with black; the wings black marbled with yellow, except the ends, which are entirely black; there is also a patch of black across the neck, near the head.

Where is this bird found?

This Bittern inhabits most parts of the United States.

It is exceedingly solitary in its habits, generally residing in some thick swamp, or among the high grass near the sea shore. It is not an uncommon bird, and still is never seen in any considerable numbers. It hides itself during the day, and unless disturbed, feeds and flies only at evening, or during the night. In some parts of the country, this bird is known by the name of Indian hen. It builds its nest among the grass, in swamps, in the most secret and retired situations, and its young, when first hatched, are said to be black.

THE FLAMINGO.

The Flamingo tribe are formed, in some respects, like the Waders, and in others like the Swimmers.—Their legs and necks are long like the first, and they are web footed like the last. In their habits and manners, they however most resemble the Waders.

THE RED FLAMINGO.

How large is the Red Flamingo?

The Red Flamingo is six feet long, from the feet to the end of the bill; and from the bill to the end of the

tail, four feet three inches.

What is the shape of this bird?

The shape of this bird is so peculiar, that without good authority, no one would believe that nature ever formed a creature so disproportionate; it being chiefly made up of legs and neck. Every part is small in proportion to the length, except the head, which seems too large to be supported by so slender a neck.

What is the colour of this bird?

This Flamingo, as its name implies, is of a red colour, which is very deep and beautiful. The bill towards the end, is black, and from thence to the root is yellow. The quill feathers are also black. But every part of the bird except these is scarlet red.

Where is this bird found?

The Red Flamingo is found in most warm climates. It is seen every where on the coast of Africa and in South America, and also in the West Indies and on the shores of the Mediterranean sea.

The body of the Flamingo is not larger than that of a goose, but this is lifted up on a pair of red legs nearly three feet into the air, while the neck is so long as easily to reach the ground from this height. As they stand and walk with their heads erect, a flock of them at a distance, is said to appear like a regiment of soldiers. They feed on small fish and water insects, which they catch by plunging their heads into the water. Now and then they trample in the mud with their feet, in order to start their prey.

It is said that when Europeans first landed on the shores of South America, they found these birds so tame and gentle as hardly to move out of the way when they came near them. They were not acquainted

with men, and therefore did not suspect any harm from them. If one of their number was shot down, the rest of the flock, instead of flying away, looked at their fallen companion with a kind of stupid astonishment, probably having never seen the like before.—But these poor birds soon learned by sorrowful experience, that men are not to be trusted, and at the present day, no animal is more shy, or watchful of their approach, than the Flamingo. When a flock of them are feeding, they take care to set a watch, which shall be ready to give warning, when any danger comes near. If the guard discover any thing uncommon, they utter a loud scream, which sounds like a trumpet, and on hearing this, the whole flock are instantly on the wing.

The nest of this bird is of a very singular construction. It is formed of mud, in the shape of a little hill, with a cavity in the top. This hill is made so high, that when the bird is sitting on her eggs, she can let her legs fall down over the side, instead of placing them under her, like other birds. In this manner she sits with her legs at full length on one side of her nest.—Sometimes, it is said, she saves herself the trouble of building a nest, by finding a hollow near the edge of some rock, where she lays her eggs, and lets her legs hang over the side, while she sits on them.

THE SNIPE.

This tribe of birds have long legs, and long bills, their necks being of moderate length. They are much smaller than the cranes and herons. Some of them

live on the sea shore, and about salt marshes, while others reside far inland on the borders of lakes, rivers and ponds. This tribe includes the Common Snipe, the Curlew, the Woodcock, and many other species. In general their shapes and habits are similar, though they differ in size, and more or less in colour.

THE LONG-BILLED CURLEW.

How large is the Long-Billed Curlew?

The Long-billed Curlew, is two feet in length, and in extent, three feet three inches. The bill is eight inches long, and crooked towards the end.

What is the colour of this bird?

The colour of this bird on the upper parts is black, spotted with pale brown; neck reddish brown, sprinkled with black; under parts pale brown; throat and about the eyes, white; legs, pale blue, and bill black, except near the root of the lower mandible, where it is yellow.

What is the shape of this bird?

In the shape of this bird there is nothing peculiar, except the length of the bill, which is somewhat longer than its whole body.

Where is this bird to be found?

The Long-billed Curlew is a native of America, and it is believed, is found no where else.

This bird inhabits chiefly, the salt marshes in the vicinity of the sea, but is also, sometimes seen on the shores of the lakes and rivers in the interior.

When on the sea shore, their food consists of small crabs, and snails, which they obtain by running their bills into the sand. When away from the sea, they eat insects and various kinds of berries. Those taken

at a distance from salt marshes, are highly esteemed as food, having none of that marshy taste, which is so disagreeable in those taken near the sea shore.

These birds, during the autumn, assemble in flocks, and are seen flying high in the air, generally in the form of the letter V, now and then uttering a loud whistling note. They fly with great swiftness, and when about to light, make several whirls around the spot, before their descent to the ground.

The Curlew migrates during the month of October, towards the south, and spends its winter in a warm climate.

We have already mentioned several striking instances of the adaptation of the forms of birds to their peculiar modes of life, and perhaps there is not in this respect, a more striking instance than that of the Curlew.

In general, it is the law of nature in the formation of birds, and especially the Waders, that long legs should have long necks, to correspond with them. Were this not the case, it is obvious that the form would be very defective and inconvenient, since the elevation of the body, without a neck of sufficient length to reach the ground, would prevent the bird from gathering its food. In the Curlew, the legs are quite long, but the neck is short, and as a compensation for what might at first be considered a defect, the bill is lengthened out to such an extent, as to seem out of all proportion to the other parts; and it is in consequence of this disproportion, that the bird is enabled to reach the ground and gather his food. But the shortness of the neck, instead of being a de-

fect is undoubtedly a perfection, since this bird gathers a part of its food by probing the sand and mud with its long bill. A short neck, therefore, for this purpose, is an advantage, as it is much stronger and more effective than a long one in introducing the bill to search for food.

We see, therefore, that although we may, at first thought, set down some of the works of the Creator as unbecoming or defective, still, when we come to inquire into their use, we cannot fail to see their perfection, and admire the wisdom of the Maker.

THE SPOON-BILL.

The Spoon-bill tribe, like the cranes, have long legs, and long necks, and like them wade in shallow water, and live by gathering their food from the bottom. They do not appear to be a very peculiar race, except in the shape of their bills, which are long, large, and swell out at the end in the form of a spoon, and hence the name *spoon* bill. The several species of this family have similar habits and manners, and differ little from each other, except in size and colour.

THE ROSEATE SPOON-BILL.

How large is the Roseate Spoon-bill?

The Roseate Spoon-bill is two feet and a half long, and, with the wings spread, four feet in extent.

What is its colour?

Its prevailing colour is that of a pale rose; the neck

is white; the upper part of the bill is black; the forehead green; around and below the eye, orange; and the tail brownish yellow.

Where is this bird found?

The Roseate Spoon-bill is found on the American coast, from Georgia to Brazil.

What is the shape of this bird?

The shape of this bird, except the bill, is similar to that of the crane, but the peculiar shape and great size of this part gives the Spoon-bill a very singular appearance.

The billof the present species is about seven inches long, and so large at the upper part, as to appear like a continuation of the head itself. From the upper part it grows smaller downward, but towards the end spreads out again to the width of two inches and a a half.

The head is entirely naked of feathers, and the neck is so slightly covered, as every where to shew the skin.

A bird so singularly made might be supposed to possess some peculiar qualities, or habits, but the Spoon-bill, so far as is known, leads a life quite similar to the crane and other waders. It is, however, probable that there is some especial advantage which the bird derives from the size and shape of his bill, because nature does not furnish such peculiar appendages, without some useful design.

This bird, when on the sea-shore, lives entirely on fish, but away from the sea, he eats frogs, and insects.

At the Cape of Good Hope, Spoon-bills are tamed, and make themselves useful in the houses, by destroying insects and reptiles.

THE RAIL.

The Rail tribe are small in size, when compared with the birds just described; but they are very active, and quick in their motions, some of them being able to run with surprising swiftness. They live on snails and insects which they find about marshes. They build their nests on the ground, and raise a large brood. They are a numerous race, some of the species being found in almost every country. One or two kinds are considered among the most delicate morsels for the table.

THE CLAPPER RAIL.

How large is the Clapper Rail?

The Clapper Rail measures fourteen inches in length, and with the wings spread, eighteen inches in extent. Its bill is a little more than two inches long.

What colour is this bird?

Its prevailing colour is dark brown, which on the upper parts is nearly black, spotted with light brown. The under parts are lighter brown, and the throat is white.

What is the shape of this Rail?

The bill is small, long, and sharp pointed; the head small; the tail is blunt, turned up at the end, and so short as to look as if cut off with a pair of shears. The legs and neck are of moderate length.

Where does this bird live?

The Clapper Rail inhabits the shores and marshes of the Atlantic ocean, from Connecticut to Florida. It is also sometimes found on the rivers, at a distance from the ocean.

This bird is known by several names, such as Mud Hen, Meadow Clapper, Meadow Hen, and Big Rail.

The Clapper Rail migrates to the south on the approach of winter, and returns again to the shores of New England in the months of April and May. The arrival of this bird, is soon known to those who live in the vicinity of salt marshes, as they announce it by a loud, harsh kind of cackling, somewhat resembling the noise made by the Guinea hen. This noise they make chiefly during the evening.

These birds build their nests on the ground, among the high grass, or sedge, which grows on salt marshes. They are constructed with much labour for so small a bird, being generally raised a foot or more from the ground, probably for the purpose of avoiding the rising of the tide. Over the nest, the top of the grass is drawn together, and the leaves woven in such a manner as to produce a kind of arch. The bird, in this instance, seems to have mistaken her instinct, for in building this arch to protect her nest from the crow and hawk, she sets up a mark by which it can be found by men at a considerable distance, and men are by far her greatest enemies. For the eggs of this bird are of so fine a flavour as to be preferred to all others; and people who live in the vicinity of salt marshes, make it a kind of business to collect them; and it is said that a single man will sometimes collect a hundred dozen in a day.

The Clapper Rail does not readily take wing and escape, like most other birds, but when pursued by the hunter or his dog, runs through the grass, winding its way like a mouse; so that even when its wing is

broken, it is nearly impossible to catch it. When driven from the grass, it will dive into the water, and come up on the other side of a ditch, and again hide among the thick grass, as before.

So close do these birds lie among the grass, that a hunter, with his dogs, may go into a marsh, where there are hundreds of them, without seeing a single one, except when they happen to cross a path, or dive into the water. They will not fly, until so closely pursued, that the dog is just on the point of seizing them, when they rise and escape with great swiftness, but light again within a few rods.

The Virginian Rail resembles the Clapper Rail in colour. and habits, and differs from it chiefly in being much smaller.

SWIMMERS.

This Order of birds is distinguished from all others by having a thin membrane, or web, between their toes, forming a foot, which may be spread out, or folded together, like a fan. Hence they are called *web-footed*, and by reason of this form, these birds are enabled to swim with wonderful ease and swiftness; for when the foot is spread, it presents a wide surface to the water, by which the bird forces itself along, and when folded, it is carried forward again, without impeding her motion. Most of these birds have short legs, which are well adapted to their modes of life, but which unfits them for wading, or for walking with much facility on the land.

They live chiefly on roots, grass, and small shell-fish, which they either obtain by diving, or pick up along the shores.

This order includes the Swan, Duck, Goose, Pelican, and many others.

THE PELICAN.

The Pelicans are a sociable tribe of birds, and at certain seasons of the year assemble in large flocks. They live on fish, which they catch by diving, and are exceedingly voracious in their appetites. Several of the species have large bags attached to the lower mandible, in which they store their fish which they do not immediately want. Some of them are trained to fishing, and are thus made useful to mankind. Some live far out at sea, while others reside in rivers and lakes. There are several species of this bird, which differ considerably from each other.

THE GREAT PELICAN.

How large is the Great Pelican?

The Great Pelican is three feet and a half long, from the bill to the end of the tail. The bill is one foot and four inches in length.

What is the colour of this bird?

Its colour is greyish white, or ash grey, except the ends of the wings, which are black.

What is the shape of the Pelican?

The shape of its legs, body, and neck, is similar to those of the goose, and swan. But its bill is peculiarly

wide at the part where it joins the head, and gradually tapers like a wedge, from this part to the point.

In what respect does the Pelican differ from other birds?

The Pelican differs from other birds in having a large bag, or pouch, attached to the under mandible, in which he stores his fish.

Where is this bird found?

This bird is found in North and South America, and in Africa.

The Pelican is celebrated chiefly on account of the enormous bag, or pouch, which, as already stated, is attached to his under jaw. When the bird goes out to fish, he does not, like other birds, swallow his prey one after the other, as fast as they are caught, but he places them in his bag, until he returns to the shore, when they are eaten at his leisure, or given to his young, as occasion requires. This bag is so large as to hold two dozen good sized fish at a time.

Labat, a traveller of credit, seems to have studied the habits and manners of the Pelican with much attention, and from him we give the following account.

This bird has strong wings, and a thick plumage all over the body. His eyes are small, and there is a sadness, and kind of melancholy in his countenance. He is, indeed, dull, slow of flight, and so very lazy, that nothing but the calls of hunger will drive him to do any thing.

When hungry, and obliged to go out a fishing, they rise forty or fifty feet above the surface of the sea, and fly slowly along, turning one eye downwards to watch for their prey. When they see a fish near enough to the surface of the water for their purpose,

they dart down and seize it, with the greatest certainty, and store it in their pouches. They then rise again, though not without difficulty and labour, and proceed as before. This work they continue, until their pouches are full, when they proceed to the shore, and having taken a comfortable seat, they proceed to make a most abundant meal on the fruits of their labour. But though they carry as many fish at once, as would serve a large party at a dinner, still the work of the morning does not procure them sufficient food for the day for in the afternoon they have another call of hunger, which they go forth to satisfy before the approach of night.

At evening, when their fishing is over, they retire a little way from the shore, where they perch on the tallest trees they can find, for the night. The figure they cut here, is very odd, and ridiculous. Their great flat feet, and their clumsy, goose-like appearance, are so out of place, when perched, with the airy birds of the forest, on the highest places, that no one can witness such a display, without amusement. It looks like an ambitious attempt to associate with their more decent neighbours, though by doing so, they only make themselves still more ridiculous by the comparison.

In the day-time, except when they are labouring to satisfy their appetites, these lazy birds spend their time in the most dismal solemnity. They sit perfectly still, with their chins resting on their breasts, and to appearance, half asleep. Thus they remain, fixed and motionless, until driven by hunger, again to go forth, in search of provisions.

Thus, like some human beings, of equal value to the world, do they spend their lives between eating and sleeping.

The same indolent habits attend them when they sit upon their eggs and hatch their young, a time when all other birds are particularly active and vigilant.

The female lays her eggs on the sand, without the least preparation of a nest, and while she is sitting on them, a person may go and take them all from under her, without her shewing any signs of anger, or any attempt at defence. When her young are hatched, she feeds them on fish, but it is only when they utter cries of distress for food, that she is induced to go out and bring them a supply.

Our author says that he took two of these birds when young, and tied them to a post, when he had the pleasure of seeing the mother come and feed them from her pouch. The young ones first took the fish, and put them into their own pouches, and then eat them at their leisure, or as they became hungry.

The Pelican is easily tamed, and is a good natured and harmless bird, though very unclean and disagreeable. In some countries, these latter qualities are, however, overlooked, and the Pelicans are trained to catch fish for their masters. The natives of some parts of South America, we are told, have been known to educate them with so much care, that they would go out without any one to direct them, and having caught their pouches full of fish, would bring them to their masters.

The Chinese train them for the same purpose ; and to prevent them from swallowing any of the fish while

away, they tie a string around their necks, just under the throat. The bird being thus unable to satisfy his hunger when away from home, goes to his master, who takes off the string, and gives him a few fish as a reward for the labours of the day. Thus is the poor bird compelled to work for his master for a small part of his own earnings.

The Pelican lives to a very great age. Gesner speaks of one that was known to be eighty years old, and was such a favourite with the emperor Maximilian, that wherever he marched with his army, he always ordered his Pelican to attend him.

THE CORMORANT.

The Cormorant tribe, like the Pelicans, live on fish, which they catch by diving. They are a most voracious race, and employ most of their time in fishing for their own provisions. One of this family has a small pouch attached to the lower mandible, like the pelican, but it does not appear to be used for the same purpose. The Common Cormorant and the Fishing Cormorant are the two species best known, but they differ very little from each other in appearance.

THE FISHING CORMORANT.

How large is the Fishing Cormorant?

The Fishing Cormorant is three feet long, and with the wings spread, about six feet in extent.

What is the colour of this bird?

Its colour, except a white spot under the throat, and another on each side, is entirely black.

What is the shape of this bird?

The shape of the Cormorant is between that of the goose and that of the falcon. Like the goose, it has short legs, and is web-footed, but the shape of its body, neck, and bill, are more like those of the falcon. Its bill is long, and the upper mandible is bent, like a hook over the end of the lower one.

Where does the Cormorant live?

This bird is found in Asia, and particularly in China, where it inhabits the bays and rivers in abundance.

This Cormorant lives entirely on fish, which he catches by diving, and is exceedingly expert in seizing and holding his prey. He cares not whether the water be fresh or salt, provided it contains an abundance of the finny race; and so craving is his appetite, that he not only fishes by day, but goes forth by night in search of plunder.

This bird is esteemed the best fisher of all the feathered race, and although large, and generally very fat, he flies with great swiftness and strength, and spends most of his time on the wing. In this respect he differs entirely from the pelican, who fishes only to prevent actual starvation.

He pursues his prey with the most untiring activity, rising to a great height over the water, and searching it carefully with his eye. The moment he discovers a fish, he drops down as though dead, but seldom rises again without success. He seizes his prey with his bill, and not like the fish-hawk, with his claws. When

he happens to strike a fish near the tail, he gives it a toss into the air, catches it again with dexterity, and then swallows it head foremost.

Travellers tell us that in many parts of China, Cormorants are educated, and trained to fishing, as dogs are trained to hunting in other countries, and that they are under such good discipline, that one man can manage a hundred of them at a time.

The fisherman carries them out into the lake, or other fishing place, perched on the sides of his boat, where they continue quiet, in expectation of his orders to begin the sport. When arrived at the proper place, he gives them a signal, or word of command, when they all fly different ways, each one to fulfil his task. It is said to be very pleasant, at this time, to witness the sagacity with which they portion out, among themselves, the different parts of the fishing ground, each one taking the part assigned him, without intruding on that of another.

They fly about over the water with great swiftness, and hunt with as much eagerness as a pack of hounds. They dive, rise again, and again plunge into the water, and do not give up the pursuit until the fish is caught, when they do not fail to carry it directly to their master, who sits waiting for them in his boat. If any bird happens to seize a fish, which is too heavy for him to carry, the next flies to his help, and gives him a lift, one taking it by the head, and the other by the tail, and in this manner, they carry it to the boat.

Having delivered their fish, they sit for a few moments on some part of the boat, and then again go in search of another. When tired, they are permitted

to rest awhile, but are never fed until their day's work is done.

All the time they are fishing, they have a string tied around their necks, so as to prevent their swallowing, otherwise they would eat so many fish, as to be neither able, nor willing, to catch more. It is therefore hunger only, and the hope of satisfying their appetites, that induces these birds to labour for their masters. At night, when the labour of the day is finished, they are well fed, and are thus prepared to go to their work again in the morning.

Sir George Staunton says, that on some of the large lakes in China, there are thousands of rafts, or boats, built entirely for this kind of fishing, and that it is astonishing to see the enormous size of the fish which these birds will catch and carry to their masters.

In England the same mode of fishing was anciently in fashion, but instead of being the business of common fishermen, it was one of the royal sports. Even so late as the reign of king Charles the Second, this sport was still in estimation, for it appears from history, that among the officers of that king, there was one, who had the title of *Master of Cormorants*.

THE DARTER.

[*This is also called Snake-bird, from the resemblance of his head and neck to a serpent.*]

How large is the Darter?

The Darter is three feet in length, and with the

wings spread, five feet in extent. The bill is four inches long.

What is the colour of this bird?

The colour of its neck, and all the under parts, is greenish black; the tail is black, tipped with white; the back and sides are black; the sides spotted with white; quill feathers white; lower mandible, and around the eyes, yellow; from the crown of the head, a white stripe runs half way down the neck.

What is the shape of this bird?

The form of the Darter is slender and beautiful: the neck is long, and is joined to the body by a graceful swell towards the breast; the head is small, ending in a long, sharp pointed bill; the legs are only about three inches long, and the feet are webbed. The aspect of the head and bill is spiteful and dangerous.

Where is this bird found?

This bird is an inhabitant of the Carolinas, Georgia and Florida. It is also found in South America, China, and other warm countries.

This bird lives on fish, which he strikes with his sharp bill, and by which they are pierced, as with a dart, and hence the name Darter.

They build their nests on trees and rocks, always taking care, however, that the place is so near the water, that they can dive into it in time of danger.

Mr. Bartram, who saw these birds in Florida, says, that they delight to sit in little communities, on the dry limbs of trees, hanging over the still water, in order to cool themselves, and at the same time to see their images in the water, as in a looking-glass. At

such times, if any one approaches them, they drop off the limbs into the water, as if dead, and for a minute or two are not to be seen, when on a sudden, at a great distance, their long slender heads and necks appear like a snake, rising erect out of the water. When they swim, no part of them is to be seen, except the head and neck, and sometimes the tip of the tail. In the heat of the day, they are seen in great numbers, sailing very high in the air over the lakes and rivers.

They are exceedingly shy, and cunning in escaping from the gunner. When shot at in the water, they dive at the flash of the gun, and do not come up again, until they get to the distance of several hundred yards; and it is in vain to try, after having once missed them, to approach within gun shot again. So that the most experienced sportsman is often obliged to give over the day's fowling, without obtaining a single specimen of this bird.

THE PENGUIN.

The Penguin seems to hold the same place among the water birds, that the ostrich does among the land birds. Both of them have wings, but neither of them can fly. The ostrich is the swiftest runner among the land animals, and the Penguin outswims all the feathered tribes. The Penguins walk erect, when they walk at all, but their legs are so short, that their gait is rather a waddle than a walk. Their clothing of feathers is extremely thick and warm. They sit erect

on their eggs, and cackle like geese, but in a hoarser voice.

There are several species of this family, all having the same shapes, and differing only in size and colour.

THE PATAGONIAN PENGUIN.

How large is the Patagonian Penguin?

The Patagonian Penguin, as it stands on the ground, is about three feet high.

What is the colour of this bird?

Its colour, from the back of the head downwards, including all the back parts, is black. The throat is also black. The front parts, beginning with a line on the middle of the head, which spreads over the breast, and down to the feet, is entirely white.

What is the shape of the Penguin?

The shape of the Penguin is very singular. The feet are placed so far back, that it cannot, like other birds, balance itself on them, and it is therefore obliged to stand erect, like a man. Its wings are so small, and the feathers on them so short, that they appear like fins, rather than like the wings of other birds, and its feathers are so hard and stiff, that they are more like scales than plumage.

What country do these birds inhabit?

These birds inhabit many of the South Sea islands, and the coasts of South America, particularly Patagonia.

Penguins assemble in flocks, and when they stand on the shore at a distance, they are said to resemble a number of children, dressed in black, with white aprons.

These birds are said to be like men, like fowls, and like fishes. Like men, they walk upright; like fowls, they are clothed with feathers; and like fishes, they paddle themselves along with their wings instead of fins.

The Penguins live on fish, and are exceedingly expert divers, as well as swimmers. The position of their legs, which renders them so awkward on the land, are admirably adapted to their residence in the water.

On the land, no creature can be more defenceless, for they have neither arms to fight with, nor legs to run away. But in the water, no bird is more difficult to approach, or more difficult to shoot when near. If they suspect, that they are in the least the objects of pursuit, they instantly sink into the water, so as to shew nothing but their bills, and if the pursuit is continued, they dive, and come up at such a distance as entirely to escape being seen again.

The nest of the Penguin is made according to her circumstances, or the danger to which she is exposed. In places where she does not fear the intrusion of man, her eggs are hatched on the sand, without the preparation of a nest. But in places which are frequented by men, she digs a hole several feet deep into the earth on the side of a bank, and in it builds her nest. In the work of digging, it is said they join and assist each other, and that when it is done, several of them hatch their young in one nest, each laying a single egg.

The flesh of this bird, though very fat, is so fishy, and disagreeable to the taste, as never to be eaten.

THE GOOSE.

The Goose tribe have strong, wide, and flat bills, the upper mandible being a little longer than the lower one, and ending in a blunt, round point, like the finger nail. Both mandibles are furnished with small teeth, like a saw, for the better holding their food. The toes are four in number, three of which are united by a membrane. Their necks are of considerable length, but their legs are short, and fitted for swimming, rather than walking. Some of this tribe, as the common Goose, are domesticated, and live on corn, while others remain wild, and eat roots, and small shell-fish, which they gather from the water.

THE WILD GOOSE.

How large is the Wild Goose?

The Wild Goose is three feet long, from the bill to the end of the tail; and with the wings spread, about five feet in extent.

What is the colour of this fowl?

In colour, the back part of the head and neck are black; the back is brown; chin, and upper part of the breast, white; the under parts, pale brown.

Where does the Wild Goose live?

The Wild Goose is very generally known throughout the United States. It however, resides in the country only during the winter. In the spring it migrates to the north, and returns again on the commencement of the cold season.

Every person is acquainted with these birds, at least so far as to have often witnessed their migratory voyages in the spring and fall. Their flight is gene-

rally so high in the air as to place them beyond the reach of the sportsman's gun. They have great power of wing, and although their flight is not so swift as that of the pigeon, and some other birds, they proceed with a steady and business-like manner, which, in a few days, carries them to a vast distance. After they begin their journey, they do not rest, night or day, but, guided by that mysterious faculty, called instinct, they wing their way, in a direct line from the shores of the Atlantic, to the frozen regions of the north. There, having reared their young, guided by the same instinctive power, they return again to the warmer regions of the south. Ever since the memory of man, these migrations have been as constant as the return of autumn and spring.

There is a belief that these birds lay and hatch their young in Canada, or on the shores of the northern lakes. But this is so far from being true, that no one has yet pretended to have seen their breeding places in any part of the world. Large flocks of them are every year seen flying over the coasts of Greenland, and Iceland, still pursuing their way to the north; and it is not improbable that they build their nests under the pole itself, where, save themselves, no living creature is seen, and where the eye of man will never penetrate.

No bird is more eagerly pursued by the fowler than this. The moment they arrive from the cold and silent regions of the pole, at any inhabited land, the attack on them commences. At Hudson's Bay, the English Company's settlement depend much on these fowl as a means of subsistence through the year.

Every spring and fall, therefore, preparations are made for their destruction in a systematic manner. A line of huts is built for this purpose, extending east and west, and placed within gun-shot of each other. In each of these huts a man is stationed, having with him two or three loaded guns. When the geese fly over this place, these men imitate their notes so exactly that the flock will answer, and at the same time wheel around, in order to discover their companion, and alight with him. When they come within gun-shot, these sportsmen discharge first one gun, and then another, and continue the fire at them, until they are out of reach. In this way, great numbers are destroyed, so that at this single place, it is said in some seasons, they kill three or four thousand. In the spring they are salted, and packed away for the summer's use, and in the fall they are frozen and kept fresh for the winter's consumption. Their feathers from this place, are an article of commerce, and are sent to England for sale.

The disposition to destroy these poor birds on account of their flesh, seems to be much the same every where as at Hudson's Bay, though the system of carnage is no where else so regularly carried on. When they are obliged to light on account of the fog, or when their flight is irregular, and near the earth, because they have lost their leader, they always appear in great distress, probably knowing from experience, their danger in going near the habitations of men. But instead of shewing compassion for their sufferings, and permitting the poor bewildered strangers to descend and rest on the earth in peace and safety, the

only reception they meet with is death and destruction.

These birds are easily tamed and domesticated, and in various parts of this country are raised, like other geese for their feathers and flesh. In England, France, and Germany, they have long been kept for these purposes. On the approach of spring, however, they are said, always to shew symptoms of uneasiness, and at the usual time of their annual migrations, they try to effect their escape. Some of them whose wings have been cut, so that they could not fly, in their anxiety to follow their companions, which they hear in the air, have been known to travel several miles to the north on foot. These tame geese always hail every flock of their own kind that passes over them, and the salute is generally returned by the voyagers, who are only prevented from lighting, by seeing the habitations of men.

Sometimes, when wild Geese have been taken and tamed, on account of their wounds, they have, on recovering, joined their companions in the air, and proceeded with them on their voyage to the north. An interesting case of this kind is related in Wilson's Ornithology.

Mr. Platt, a respectable farmer on Long Island, wounded a Wild Goose in such a manner, that he caught and carried it home with him. It proved to be a female, and turning it into his yard, with a flock of tame geese, it soon became quite familiar, and in a little time the wounded wing got entirely well. In the following spring, when the Wild Geese were migrating to the north, a flock happening to pass over

Mr. Platt's barn yard, this Goose, hearing their well known voices, and not being quite contented with her situation, instantly mounted into the air,—joined the flock, and disappeared with them. Mr. Platt was sorry for the loss of his favourite Goose, and of course never expected to see her again. But in the autumn, when these birds migrate to the south, he happened to be standing in his yard, when a flock of them appeared in a direction to pass over him. While looking at them, he saw three fly out from among the rest, and after wheeling several times around, they came down, and to his astonishment alighted in his yard. In a few moments, Mr. Platt saw that one of these was his lost favourite, which had escaped the spring before. She had been with her companions to the frozen regions of the north, where having hatched and reared her young, she now returned with her little family to her old master.

THE SWAN.

How large is the Swan?

The Swan is five feet long, and with the wings spread, seven feet and a half in extent. His weight is about twenty-five pounds.

What kind of bird is the Swan?

This bird, although of the goose kind, is by far superior in size and elegance to any other of this tribe.

The form of the Swan has ever been celebrated for its beauty and gracefulness. On the land, its short

legs and waddling gait, it is true, make but an indifferent figure. But on its proper element, when it proudly rows itself along, with its body in appearance only just touching the water, and its head elevated in the air, no bird can compare with this in dignity of form or gracefulness of movement.

Every part of the Swan seems to be formed in the most regular and charming proportions. Its profile presents an outline of curves, which are the most easy, elegant and pleasing that can be conceived, and when the bird is in motion, these lines constantly receive new graces by the changes they undergo.

This bird is as delicate in its appetite as it is elegant in its form. Its food is corn, bread, some kinds of seeds, and herbs which grow by the water side.

The Swan has been so long domesticated, that at the present day it is doubtful if this species any where exists in the wild state.

She builds her nest with sticks and grass, by the side of some river or lake, always selecting, if she can, an island for this purpose, probably on account of its greater safety from the approach of animals. The pair assist each other in this work, and the female becomes so attached to the place where her first nest is built as commonly to repair and occupy it, for many years in succession.

When the young are hatched, the old ones are exceedingly proud of their charge, and careful to protect them from harm. At this time it is dangerous for any person to disturb the brood, or to approach near them, for the parents are so violent in defending them,

and strike with such force with the wings as to beat a person to the ground, or break his leg, or arm.

One of these birds, while sitting on her nest, observed a fox swimming towards her. She instantly darted into the water, swam out to him, and commenced the attack. The fox tried every way to gain the shore, where he could defend himself to better advantage; but the Swan beat him with her wings with such force, that he could neither swim forward, nor keep his head above the water; and she finally succeeded in drowning him, on the spot. After this, in the sight of several persons who saw the battle, she returned to her nest in triumph.

The Swan sits two months on her eggs, and the birds are a year in growing to their full size. They live to a very great age. Dr. Goldsmith thinks that the common goose will live a hundred years, and says that it is not improbable the Swan may live much longer.

These birds were formerly held in such high estimation in England, that king Edward the Fourth passed a law, forbidding any person, not of the royal family, to keep Swans, unless he was a gentleman by birth, and had a certain income per year. By another law, made afterwards, the punishment for stealing the eggs of this bird, was imprisonment for one year and a day, and in addition to this, a fine according to the king's will.

THE DUCK.

The Duck tribe differs from the goose, chiefly in size and colour, their form and habits being similar to those of the geese. Like the geese, some of this tribe have been long domesticated, while most of the species remain wild.

The Ducks, through all their varieties, are much alike in most of their manners and habits. They all dive, fly, or swim, as occasion requires. Most of them inhabit the salt water, but some kinds live entirely among rivers and lakes, and never approach the sea.

Ducks are stupid, and careless birds. Even in nurturing their young, they do not usually display that attention and vigilance, so common to the feathered race. The female seems to be a heedless, inattentive mother, and often forgets her young when they most need her care. Having led them to the pond, she seems to think that she has provided for all their wants, by shewing them the water. She does not, like the hen, call her family around her, and teach them how to provide for themselves. If the vermin about the pond destroy her young, she does not miss them, and if she hears them cry, she takes little notice of their distress. While sitting, she sometimes loiters away her time at the pond, ducking and refreshing herself in the water, until her eggs grow cold and lifeless.

The hen is a nurse of much better character. She sits on her eggs with the most determined perseverance; never leaves them, but for a few moments at a time, and hurries back as though her presence was

of the utmost consequence. If her mistress prefers to have her hatch a brood of ducks instead of her own offspring, she adopts the little strangers, and brings them up with the same care as if they had been her own.

THE EIDER DUCK.

How large is the Eider Duck?

The Eider Duck is two feet three inches long, and with the wings spread, three feet in extent; being about the size of a common goose.

What is the colour of the Eider Duck?

The colour of the male, from the throat to the breast, and along the back, is white. The quill feathers, the tail, and all the under parts are black; there is also a patch of black on each side of the head, including the eyes, and a part of the bill.

The colour of the female is reddish brown, curiously marked with spots of black and red; the quill feathers and tail are black; and the bill and legs yellow.

Where does this Duck live?

This Duck inhabits the Western Isles of Scotland, the sea coasts of Norway, Greenland, and Iceland, and the northern parts of North America.

The Eider Duck has long been celebrated, on account of the down which it affords, and which, in Europe and America, is considered a great luxury, on account of its lightness and warmth.

This is called *Eider down*, and comes from Lapland and Iceland, in which countries these birds are found in great numbers.

The inhabitants of these countries, who live near the sea shore, make it a part of their business to plunder these poor birds of their eggs, and their down. The eggs, during the spring, they use as food in their families, and by the sale of the down, they every year obtain considerable sums of money.

The nests of these Ducks are formed of dry grass, and sea-weed, lined on the inside with down, which the female plucks from her breast for this purpose. In the nest, thus made soft, and warm, she lays five eggs, which she also covers with down. The inhabitants, having found these nests while building, they know when to visit them again, and after the eggs are all laid, they go and take them away, together with the down which covers them, as well as that with which the nest is lined. The female then begins again, and a second time strips her breast, lines her nest with the down, and lays another nest of eggs; but again she is deprived of both, by the same hand that plundered her before. Once more the poor bird, in her anxiety to raise a family, begins to prepare a place to hatch them, but her breast being naked, can afford no down, with which to furnish it. In this extremity, it is said, the male kindly interposes for her relief, and plucks his own breast, to give her the proper quantity of down. Even this, these cruel robbers sometimes take away; then the birds, finding that no mercy is shewn them, leave the place entirely, and seek a more secret situation where they can raise their brood in safety.

One Duck it is said, will furnish a half a pound of down in a season, and this is so valuable as to sell for

two dollars a pound in Lapland. It is extremely fine, soft, and warm, and is so elastic that a quantity which is sufficient to fill a bed quilt may be compressed within the two hands.

The Iceland Company, every year, bring from that country from fifteen hundred to two thousand pounds of this down. This they sell at Copenhagen, and from thence it is distributed into every part of Europe, and considerable quantities of it come to the northern parts of America.

The male Eider Duck is exceedingly attentive to the female, while she is sitting on her eggs, and during that time remains near the shore, swimming backwards and forwards not far from the nest, to see that nothing disturbs her. But as soon as the young are hatched, he sails away and leaves the brood to take care of themselves.

The mother, however, has more feeling for her young, and being thus entrusted with their care and education, she proves herself a provident and faithful parent. While they are very young, she takes care to introduce them to the water, as the place on which their after lives are chiefly to be spent. Having led them to the edge of the water, she makes the whole brood crawl upon her back, and then swims off a little distance from the shore. She then dives, herself, thus leaving her brood on the surface of the water, and in this manner are they compelled to exercise themselves in swimming. After this, they are seldom seen on the land, until they go there for the purpose of rearing a brood for themselves.

THE PETREL.

The bills of this tribe are straight, except at the end, where they are a little hooked. The legs are small, and the wings long and strong. They fly with amazing swiftness, and are often seen far out at sea. In calm weather they sit on the water, but before, and during a storm, they are constantly on the wing. The females lay their eggs in holes in the ground, or in the fissures of rocks. They defend their young by spitting oil from their mouths in the faces of their enemies. There are many species of this bird, differing considerably in size and colour.

STORMY PETREL.

[*These birds are also called Mother Carey's Chickens.*]

How large is the Stormy Petrel?

The Stormy Petrel is about the size of the swallow, being seven inches in length, and, with the wings spread, nearly fourteen inches in extent.

What is the colour of this bird?

Its colour, except a spot of white near the tail, is black; the feet are yellow.

Where is this bird found?

The Stormy Petrel is occasionally seen on the ocean, in nearly every part of the world. Sometimes it is met with more than a thousand miles from the land.

There are twenty-four species of the Petrel tribe, of which the present one is the smallest, being, indeed, so far as is known, the least of all web-footed birds.

This bird, among sailors, has ever been considered a mysterious and ominous bird, and even at the present

day, many persons believe that its appearance at sea, is the occasion of approaching evil, or at least that it is a messenger sent to warn them to prepare for a storm.

Being often seen at a great distance from the land, people who do not consider that it can fly eight or nine hundred miles in a day, do not readily conceive where it can rear its young, and hence the sailors think that they hatch their eggs under their wings as they sit on the water.

It is hardly necessary to say that this poor little bird is not the occasion of any evil to the sailor ; nor does it hatch its eggs under its wing, as they believe. It has, however, some habits peculiar to itself, and particularly in respect to its flying about over the ocean at such vast distances from the land. It is also true that this bird is most frequently seen before a storm, and during its continuance. At such times, flocks of them hover around the ship, and are more active than common in picking up any thing that happens to fall overboard, such as the refuse of provisions, or any oily matter which the cook throws away. But particular activity, and even marks of distress, before a storm, are shewn by many birds. The instinct of the crane, as has already been remarked, teaches her to prepare for a coming storm, as well as when to begin her annual flight. Snow birds are active in searching for food before a storm. Woodpeckers, curlews, and other birds, are particularly noisy at the same time, and every housewife, when she has a flock of geese, can foretel, by their actions, the approach of falling weather.

The Stormy Petrel, therefore, when it foretels, by its actions, that a storm is approaching, does nothing but what is common to many other birds, and on this account ought to be looked upon by the sailors, as something which contributes to his safety by warning him of his danger, rather than a bird of omen, which has come to do him mischief.

Stormy Petrels hatch their young in great numbers on the islands of Bermuda, and Cuba, and on the coasts of Florida. They build their nests among the caves and fissures of the rocks, and feed their young only during the night. In the day time, they wander over the ocean, and such is the rapidity of their flight, that they can be several hundred miles at sea in the middle of the day and home again at evening.

Mr. Wilson says, "It is an interesting sight to observe these little birds in a gale coursing over the waves, down the declivities, up the ascents of the foaming surf that threatens to burst over their heads; sweeping along the hollow troughs of the sea, as in a sheltered valley, and again mounting with the rising billow, and just above its surface, occasionally dropping its feet, which, striking the water, throws it up again with additional force; sometimes leaping, with both legs parallel, on the surface of the roughest waves, for several yards at a time."

But the most singular peculiarity of this bird, is its faculty of standing, or even running on the surface of the water with apparent facility. When any greasy matter is thrown overboard, these birds instantly collect around it, and facing to windward, with their long wings expanded, and their webbed feet patting the

water, the lightness of their bodies, and the action of the wind on their wings enable them to do this (that is, to stand on the surface of the water,) with ease. In calm weather, they perform the same manœuvre, by keeping their wings just so much in action as to prevent their feet from sinking below the surface. According to Buffon, it is from this singular habit that these birds are named *Petrel*, the name being derived from Peter, the apostle, who, the Scripture informs us, walked upon the water.

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